



KASA AND KASA

**Papers on the Lives, Times and Images
of Téwodros II and Yohannes IV
(1855-1889)**

Edited by

**Taddese Beyene
Richard Pankhurst
Shiferaw Bekele**

**INSTITUTE OF ETHIOPIAN STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**



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The Institute of Ethiopian Studies would like to express its gratitude to computer specialist Tatek Samare for formatting and preparing this volume for publication.

PREFACE

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies, in 1988-89, held two public gatherings to commemorate two important historical anniversaries. The first was the Battle of Mäqdäla and the death of King of Kings Téwodros II which had occurred one hundred and twenty years earlier on April 13, 1968; the second was the Battle of Mätämma and the death of King of Kings Yohannes IV a century earlier on March 9, 1889. Both events are of major importance in Ethiopian history, as were the Ethiopian rulers whose lives are here commemorated.

Téwodros, as apparent from the papers here published, enjoys a unique position in Ethiopian history, not only as a great patriot, but also as a pioneer of reunification, modernization and reform. To mark the anniversary of his heroic death the Institute of Ethiopian Studies organized a commemoration which was opened by University President Comrade Dr. Abiye Kifle. It consisted of a two-day Conference and a major Exhibition, both of which were remarkably well attended and received extensive media attention.

The Conference, on Téwodros and the Battle of Mäqdäla, which was held at Ras Makonnen Hall on April 14 and 15, 1988 was addressed by a number of distinguished scholars who dealt with many aspects of Téwodros's life and aspirations. The event was innovative in that it comprised two separate sessions, one in Amharic and the other in English.

The Exhibition, which lasted a full week, featured traditional and modern Ethiopian paintings of Téwodros and Mäqdäla, as well as engravings, books and other publications on the notable Ethiopian ruler and his times. Several fine pictures and sculptures were kindly lent by the School of Fine Arts. Several reproductions of these works are included in the present volume, and, we trust, will add to its interest.

The conference on Emperor Yohannes IV and the Battle of Mätämma was held in the College of Social Sciences on March 9, 1989. Also well attended it likewise attracted considerable media coverage.

The reign of Yohannes, like that of Téwodros, was shown as a time when Ethiopia fought heroically for her independence against foreign invaders, Egyptians, Mahdists and later Italian colonialists.

Yohannes was a great Ethiopian patriot, and, though perhaps less of an innovator than his predecessor, was the first Ethiopian ruler to institute a truly national flag, the first to appoint a consul abroad, the first to gain access to substantial quantities of modern fire-arms, and the first to popularize the idea of modern vaccine against smallpox.

The reign of Yohannes was moreover seen as representing a direct continuation of that of Téwodros, because Yohannes tried to implement some of the more important items on Téwodros's agenda. While Téwodros failed tragically in achieving his ends Yohannes was much more successful, particularly in restoring the territorial extent of the Ethiopian state. For all their differences the two great Ethiopian monarchs thus represent a continuum in the process of national rejuvenation. We therefore feel it appropriate to bring the papers of the two conferences together in a single volume.

Because conference participants used several systems of transliteration, which some of them wish to retain, the Editors have decided to maintain the spellings used in the original papers, but have made a few minimal changes in the interest of consistency.

The Editors wish to express their thanks to all those who made the conference and this publication possible. Special thanks are due to Ato Abdulrahman Sherif, Director of the School of Fine Arts, who most kindly lent paintings and sculpture; to Woizero Membere Wolde Georgis for photographic assistance, and to Ato Tatek Samare for typesetting these papers so expertly on the computer.

Thanks are due also to the many friends and colleagues who assisted with the Symposium and Exhibition, as well as with the publication of the present volume. They include Maitre-Artiste Afework Teklé who made available a study for stamps, also reproduced in this volume; Woizero Ethiopia Wubneh who lent a study by Alefelege Selam for a proposed statue of Téwodros, in Téwodros square, Addis Ababa; Ato Getachew Kebre Sellassie for making available the painting by Tibebe Terfa included in this volume and Santha Faiia for the book.

The Editors

PART I.
PROLOGUE

Tsegaye Gabre Medhin's Opening Talk and Recitation

Richard Pankhurst

The symposium was opened by playwright and poet-laureate Tsegaye Gabre Medhin who talked extempore on his well-known play *Téwodros*, and concluded by reciting Kassa's farewell speech in it.

Tsegaye, speaking not only as a poet, but also as an historian and a defender of Ethiopian culture, later explained to the present writer the need, as he saw it, for the "heroification of our heroes".

One of Tsegaye's central arguments is that there is in Ethiopia a widespread fear of heroes, based at least in part on a tendency towards destructive criticism, largely grounded on jealousy of the great or famous which often serve as a substitute for constructive effort and achievement. This destructive approach, which Tsegaye describes as the *meqañña* phenomenon, is, he believes, deeply engrained, and has its parallel in ancient Egypt where an incoming Pharaoh, instead of attempting to achieve something by his own effort, would see an inscription erected by a predecessor, and then obliterate the latter's name and replace it with his own. The comparison between such action and the practice in modern Ethiopia whereby scholars often seek to prove themselves great by denying the greatness of others is for Tsegaye far from coincidental, for the Ethiopians and Egyptians, together with the Nubians and Somalis, share, he argues, a common legacy as children of Kam. It is important, he feels, that this *meqañña* attitude should be recognized, for a people to be strong must understand its weaknesses no less than its strengths. He therefore regrets that current television presentations of Ethiopia's heroes are too often diminutisations rather than glorifications of their lives.

Téwodros, Tsegaye insists, suffered from the *meqañña* complex of his compatriots even in his lifetime, for it was because of it that he was abandoned and forsaken by almost all of his army at Mäqdäla. Thus left in a limbo he was a victim, not only of the British, but also of his own people, for at the end of his life he was left to face a powerful enemy almost alone.

Téwodros, his aspirations and his greatness, Tsegaye argues, have too often been denied and denigrated, with the result that ignorance about Ethiopia's past has deliberately been fostered. The Ethiopian people have thereby been left the poorer and the weaker.

It is Tsegaye's belief that Ethiopians should reject such deliberate ignorance, and endeavour instead to place themselves in the shoes of their heroes, great men

such as Kaléb and Abraha, Téwodros and Gebreyé, Menilek, Alula, Gobäna, and Habtä Giyorgis. Ethiopians of the present generation should thus try to understand the position of their heroes rather than to create cartoon pictures of them the more easily to destroy them.

Ethiopians, in Tsegaye's view, should instead encourage the study and appreciation of her heroes; and Ethiopian school-children should learn about Téwodros and their heroes as Russian youngsters read about Peter the Great and Americans about Abraham Lincoln.

Tsegaye went on to argue that European academic prejudice deliberately failed to recognize that the civilization of Europe owed much to greater Ethiopian-Egyptian-Nubian civilizations of the past. This was, however, no reason for Ethiopia's heroes, who were responsible for these great civilizations to be turned into cartoons by what he dubbed as "smaller local minds newly fabricated in the image of their European masters".

Téwodros, as Tsegaye conceives him, was above all an Ethiopian, and the product of Ethiopian culture - as well as of Ethiopia's long and unique history of independence. It was therefore not surprising, Tsegaye argues, that Queen Victoria, the British Government and General Robert Napier could not understand Téwodros. This was their failing, the consequence of their narrow European thinking, not his.

Téwodros was, as Tsegaye sees him, a master of Amharic, a poet, and an intellectual. Born of the family of the *mäsafent*, through his father *Däjazma* Haylu who was linked to the great *Ras* Gugsä and *Ras* Dori, Téwodros was, he believes, probably also well versed in the Oromo traditions of northern Ethiopia, and had moreover a good knowledge of Arabic as well.

The Amharic language, he went on to argue, was born, nurtured and fed by many other languages, and in the process enriched itself greatly. These languages he sees as comprising Sabaeen, Ge'ez, Agäw, and Kamitic, as well as the old language of the hieroglyphics and the Meriotic ancestor languages, and later Greek, and Amharic's "sister languages" Hebrew and Arabic. Amharic, he argues, today represents the epicentre of present-day Ethiopianism, which, as he sees it, is currently under threat both from the advance of foreign languages, in particular from English, French and Arabic, and from Philistines in the country itself who in their effort to parade themselves as modern and Western-educated show off their knowledge of foreign languages, sport dark-rimmed glasses - and fail to understand and appreciate the wealth, creativity and importance of their own native tongue. Emphasizing this latter point Tsegaye contends that great Amharic and Ge'ez verse, both religious and secular, as well as great Ethiopian secular and Church music, great Islamic *ziyera*, the great oral literature of all the country's nationalities, and great works such as those of Kidanä Wäld Keflé, Yared, Sheik

Tolala Jaefar, Keflä Yohannes, Yoftahé Negussé, Kābādā Mika'él, and others should receive the same recognition - and diffusion - into Ethiopia as that afforded to Shakespeare in England or Pushkin in Russia.

Hence the importance in the play, as well as in history, of Kassa's final message, uttered by Téwodros, a master of Amharic, in his own expressive tongue: words uttered in the aftermath of the British assault, after he had been left in a limbo, words spoken to his own compatriots one hundred and twenty years after his death.

Tsegaye concluded by arguing that many Ethiopian heroes played a major role on the wider international stage. He recalled that around 1400 B.C. the Ethiopian Pharaoh Thutmosis III had ruled Egypt and much of the Mediterranean as far as the upper reaches of Syria, and that Kaléb's expedition to south Arabia (514-542 A.D) was mentioned in the Holy Qoran. Téwodros, who to Tsegaye was only another Thutmosis III or Kaléb, was, he declared, a product of the inbuilt resilience of Ethiopia's historic continuity, which, almost instinctively born, has survived for millennia.

It is crucially important, Tsegaye insists, to preserve and strengthen the Ethiopian heritage which served as the spark of hope for the African people who were colonized for so long, and dreamt of independence.

Téwodros and Ethiopia's other heroes were thus not only relevant to their own local areas of Ethiopia, as some narrow-minded persons of the present generation like to assume, but were heroes for the entire Black World. Menilek was thus admired in his day by the Haitian black nationalist Benito Sylvian, and his victory at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 was extolled in later times by Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Leopold Senghor and Sheikh Anta Diop, as well as many other Africans and Black Americans of African descent who were themselves heroes in their own right.

Ethiopia, Tsegaye proclaims, must be proud of her heroes, above all of Téwodros, and cherish his, and their, memory to the end.

የቴዎድሮስ ስንብት ከመቅደሳ*

ተስፋ በግ ምድረ በዳ
ያንድ እውነት ይሆናል ዕዳ፤
እና ትንፋሽም ሆኜብኸ መራር መከራ
«ሩቅ አሳቢ ቅርብ አዳሪ፤»
እውነት ለንቺ ተስፋ ናት ጉስቁል ልሳንሽን ነክሳሽ
ክንድሽን ከዘለ ቅርስሽ መጠላለፍ ሲሆን እግሽ
ከእንግሊዝ የሞት አግልክት መተናነት ሲሆን ድርሻሽ
መልመጥመጡ፤ መሸቶጥቶጡ ድንገት የሚያዋግሽ
የኔ እውነት ሆነብኸ ዕዳሽ።
ወራሪም ፈጣሪን ለያቅ
የግለውን በሰላል እንጂ ወድቋል ብሎ ገፉ ለያልቅ
መቶ ትተርፈያለሽ ኢትዮጵያ ሕዋስሽ አብርኝ ባልሠራ
አንገትሽ ብቻ መቅደሳ አፋፍ ወጥታ ብታበራ
የቀረው ሠራ አከላትሽ በየጥሻው ተዘርሮ
ከአባት በወረሰሽው ንፍገት ነብዝ ደንዝዝ ተቀብሮ
በጉል ወጌሻ ታጅሎ
እጅና እግርሽ ታሸቶ ዝሎ
እኔን ለጥንብ አንሳ ጥሎ፤
ከደቀቀ ከደከመ ክንድሽ አልነሣ ካለ
ሞት እንጂ ለኔስ ምንኣለ?
ሆኖም ጉስቋላ አልምሰልሽ የሚያዝንልኝ አልፈልገም
ጠላትሽን በክንድሽ እንጂ በእንባሽ ወዝ በላሸንፍም
የልቤን ፍቅር በስተቀር እግወርስሽም ውል የለኝ
የኮሰ ሽጭ ልጅ ደሃ ነኝ።

* ጸጋዬ ገብረ መድኅን፤ እባት ወይ አበበ ገጽ
፱፻፬፣፱፻፰፣ ብርሃንና ሰላም ግተሚያ ቤት፤ አዲስ
አበበ፤ ፲፱፻፰፤ ዓ.ም
(ከ«ቴዎድሮስ» ቴአትር የመጨረሻው ክፍል)

ደሞም ያላንቺ የለኝና
 ድሌም የተሰፋ ጎሐ በይሆን ከሞት ጋር ትገል ነውና
 ከዚህ ሌላ ትእዛዝ ትውረሽ ሳይነጋ እንደሰመሸሽብኝ
 ጊዜና ትውልድ ይፍረደን ሳልነቃ እንደሰረፈድሽብኝ።
 ያም ሆኖ ለራስሽ እንጂ ለኔ ከቶም አታልቅሺ እንቺነሽ
 እንባ እምትሺ፤
 የእምነትሽ መተሣሰሪያ፤ ውልሽ ለተላቀቀብሽ
 ላንቺ ነው እንባ እሚያስፈልግሽ።
 አዎን ይኸን እውቁልኝ ምስክር ሁኑኝ ሰማዕታት
 ለሷ ነው እንባ እሚያስፈልጋት።
 ከጠላቶቼ ጭብጥ ውስጥ ትንፋሼን በጆ ስነጥቃት
 ሞቴን ከመንጋጋቸው ውስጥ መንጭቄ እኔው ሰሞታት
 ለገራ ብድር ልከፍላት
 የነፈገቺኝን ፍቅር በራሴ ሞት ልለግላት
 ደግሞ ከሞቴ በኋላ በመንፈስ ጣር ሰሞግታት!
 ያ ኔነው እንባዋ የሚያጥራት።
 ስለዚህ ለራስሽ እንጂ ልቅሶሽ ለኔ ምን ሊረባ
 ብቸኛ ምራት ነው ኃይሉ፤ ወኔ መስለቢያው ነው እንባ።
 እና ለራስሽ እዘኝ
 እንጂ ከቶ ለኔ አትባክኝ።
 ይልቅስ ተረት ልንገርሽ፤ የተላከ ከእንግሊዝ ዘንድ
 እጅህን ስጥ አለኝ ፈረንጅ እጅ ተይዞ ሊወሰድ ምን እጅ
 አለው የእሳት ሰደድ?
 እያውቅም ከንደ እንደሚያነድ።
 ዳዊት እንዲያ በበገናው፤ ማልቀስ ማላዘን መያዙ
 ይኸ የጎልያድ ውላጅ፤ ቢበዘበት ነው መዘዙ
 ምንጩ እንደአሸን፤ እየፈለ አገሩን ምድሩን ማንቀዙ
 ቸግሮት ነው፤ መጋፈጡ፤ ከስንቱ መወናወፋ
 በበላንጣው ሰቢያ ምክንያት፤ የራሱን ወገን ማርገፋ።
 ታዲያ እንግዲህ አንቺ ሊትዮ ጵያ፤ እኛ ስ
 ልጆችሽ፤ ምንድነን
 እመንኩሽ ማለት የማንችል ፍቅራችን የሚያስነውረን
 ዕዳችን የሚያስፎክረን
 ገፋችን የሚያስከብረን

ቅንነት የሚያሳፍረን ቂማችን የሚያስደስተን
 ሸረ ምንድነን? ምንድነን?
 አሜከላ እሚያብብብን
 ፍጥ እሚለመልምብን፤
 ከአረም ጋር ያፈራን ጊንጦች ከእንክርዳድ ያልተለየን ዘር
 ገርደን ከምርቱ ተማጥቶ፤ከቶ ያልተበራየን መከር
 ምንድነን? ምንድነን እኮ?
 አረጋዊውን በንቀልባ፤ከምንሸከም እንኮኮ
 ጎልግሳውን ከወኔ ጣር፤ከልፈታን ከፍርሃት ምርኮ
 እንደወደ ገባ ወደል፤ መጠለሉን ከሴት ታኮ
 ከቃተን ምንድነን እኮ?
 እየሽ እንቺ እማማ ኢትዮጵያ እየሽ እንቺ እናት ዓለም
 ቃል የእምነት ዕዳ ነው እንጂ፤ያበት የናት እኮ
 አይደለም።
 ያም ይቅርና መርዶ ለርዳሽ፤ሰሚው እኔ እንደሰማሁት
 እርም በልተሽ ከምትቀሪ ሰሚ ገብርዬንም ጣሉት።
 እስቲ እንግዲህ በይ ፍረጂኝ፤ከእንግዲህ እኔ ፍሪ
 አለይም?
 «ዘርቶ መቃም ወልደ መሳም»
 አበበል ለኔ አይበልም?
 እስቲ ገብርዬን መሰል ዘር፤ፍሬው ከቶ አይለመልምም?
 እኔስ ዘር ዘራሁ አልልም?
 ምነው ፍንጭትክን ገብርዬ፤ያን ፍንጭትክን አጠለሙት
 እንደራት ልግ አከሰሉት
 እንደከሰ አስመረሩት?
 ከጡቶችሽ እቅፍ ነጥቀው፤ከማገፀንሽ ፍቅር ቆርጠው
 እውነትን ሲገሉ እንዲህ ነው፤ረገግታውን አጠለመው።
 እስቲ እበክህን ገብርዬ የዘረን እንኳ ሰቀህ ሙት
 በዕድል ጥቀርሻ እንደ አጃሉት
 እንደወለድ ጣውንት ጡት
 እርማ ጉሳ እንዳቀለሙት
 ረገግታህን አያጥቁሩት።
 እምቢ በላቸው ገብርዬ፤በአበት ሢራ እንደሰገዘቱት
 በመሃላ እንደሰገደት
 የነፍሱህን ሮራ ብርሃን፤ከገጽህ እንደቀበሩት

ዘለዓለም ለያወልሙት
ወንድምዬ እምቢ በላቸው፤ የዘረን እንኳ ስቀህ ሙት።
ያለፈ ጥረታችንን፤ ስብታምሙ ትዝ ሲለኝ
ከሞከርነው ነገር ይልቅ፤ ያልሞከርነው እግሩ።
እና በኔ ይሁንብህ፤ መጣሁ ተቀበለኝ፤
እኔም ለዋይህ አድምጠኝ
እኚህን ስጥ አለኝ ፈረንጅ፤ እኛ ተይዞ ሲወሰድ
ምን እኛ አለው የእሳት ሰደድ?
አያውቅም ከንደ እንደሚያነድ።

Meqdela Revisited

Sven Rubenson

My first and only physical visit to Meqdela took place in 1965 when I was writing the biography of Tewodros. I approached the mountain fortress from the "wrong" direction: by Land Rover from Dese to Tenta, then by mule up the steep south wall and through *Kaffir Berr*. The normal and easier approach from Tewodros's capital Debre Tabor to the northwest is through *Kokit Berr* at the other end of the *amba*. It was from that direction that Tewodros came when he captured the mountain in 1855 as well as when he went to Meqdela to defy the British army in 1868. To enter through the *Kaffir Berr* is of course no proper way of approaching the history of Tewodros and Meqdela. I, too, should have come from the Lake Tana region, from Dembiya and Qwara, from Gonder and Debre Tabor.

My scholarly involvement with Meqdela and Tewodros began earlier - almost forty years ago - and from what might also be called the "wrong" direction. It was the British expedition as an early chapter of European intervention in Ethiopian affairs that interested me. In other words, my approach then was from the coast. It was only later that the personality and policies of Tewodros began to fascinate me, and Meqdela emerged as the tragic conclusion of a once promising reign rather than as the opening chapter of colonialism in the area.

The reason for my approach is quite easy to explain. When I decided to write a dissertation in Ethiopian history in 1952, I knew too little about Ethiopia and the Ethiopians to attempt a genuinely Ethiopian topic. Besides, as a teenager, I had received my first object lesson in international politics through the so-called Abyssinian crisis of 1935-36. Among the many excuses for the aggression was one called "the scar of Adwa", inflicted on Italy forty years earlier. A little more than a decade later, my first five years in Ethiopia coincided with the intense discussions and the diplomatic wrangling over the future of Eritrea. Among historians, moreover, the "scramble for Africa school" still reigned supreme. It was only in the late fifties that some graduated to the "scramble in Africa school".

Seeking an explanation for the survival of Ethiopia as an independent nation, I moved backwards in time and arrived at Meqdela. I read Holland and Hozier, Markham and Stanley, Rassam, Blanc, Flad and Waldmeier; I tried to understand the chronicles of Zeneb and Welde Maryam and waded through the British Parliamentary Papers and as much of the British and French archival materials as one can cover in a few months.

The outcome was negative as far as my main theme was concerned. The hypothesis that the British involvement in Ethiopia during the reign of Tewodros and the successful expedition to Meqdela somehow opened up Ethiopia and paved the way for Italian occupation of the coast had to be discarded. Meqdela was, on the contrary, followed by an unexpected European withdrawal from central Ethiopia and its politics for a decade or more. I had to look elsewhere for the origins of the history that led to the battle of Adwa. Eventually I found them in the less spectacular activities of Italian and French missionaries and the alliance between the ambitious French/British consul at Massawa, Werner Munzinger, and the no less ambitious Khedive Ismail of Egypt. I discovered that *Bogos* not *Meqdela*, represents the beginning of an Italian Eritrea as the stepping stone for the conquest of Ethiopia.¹

In terms of historical significance for Ethiopia, Meqdela turned out to be no more than an episode. To be sure, the members of the expedition and the British Government, who spent nine million pounds on the expedition, did not see it that way. To Henry Stanley, who accompanied the expedition, the campaign was nothing less than "*this last, this best, this greatest of victories*. ... to be remembered of all men in all lands, among the most wonderfully successful campaigns ever conducted in history".² There was some dissent, such as Markham's comment that "the only officers in the campaign who had been exposed to any real danger" were the captive members of the diplomatic mission, Rassam, Blanc and Prideaux, on whose behalf the expedition had been undertaken.³

Nevertheless a myth was born. One British historian determined that the Ethiopians had seen "the host of the invincible Theodore fade away into nothing before the European weapons of the British"; another concluded that "on Good Friday, the 10th of April 1868, when the British guns blew Theodore's army to pieces, Abyssinian pride received a wound from which even the victory over the Italians at Adwa has not enabled it to recover".⁴ It was an odd link between Adwa and Meqdela, and one I found hard to accept.⁵ Edward Ullendorff's rewording in 1960 has not helped: "Yet even those Ethiopian nobles who had been the loudest in their denunciation of Theodore and had benefited most from his removal could not entirely forget that their country, invincible Ethiopia, had been defeated and temporarily occupied by a European power - a rankling pain which even the great victory of Adwa was not to dull completely."⁶

This strikes me more as an expression of British mentality than as a well-founded assessment of the possible consequences of what happened at Meqdela. First of all it was not "Ethiopia" (invincible in its own eyes or not) that was defeated and "temporarily occupied"(!) by Great Britain. The British made it very clear that they were not going to war with Ethiopia. This was understood and accepted by the most prominent of the Ethiopian nobles, Gobeze/Tekle Giyorgis, Kasa/Yohannis and Minilik, and most certainly by their followers as well.

They were all in open rebellion against Tewodros and had been so for years. Minilik had made his position as sovereign very clear by styling himself *niguse negest* in a letter to Queen Victoria as early as six months before Sir Robert Napier arrived on the Red Sea Coast.⁷ Gobeze was busy picking up the territories abandoned by Tewodros in the Tana region in anticipation of the King's downfall and the opportunity to declare himself supreme ruler at Gonder. Although he did not care to meet Napier in person, he certainly regarded him more as an ally than an enemy. Kasa, finally, was quite willing to assist and in fact assisted the British army actively. He had followed his overlord Gobeze in the latter's rebellion against Tewodros but then had rebelled in his turn, presumably to prepare the way for a bid of his own for the top position after the anticipated fall of Tewodros.

It is hard to imagine how the kind of feeling mentioned above could have grown out of this situation. My conclusion in 1954 was:

By the time the British government fully realized that they would have to resort to military means [to free the hostages], the emperor's realm consisted *de facto* of Begemdir alone, i.e. at the most one sixth of the Ethiopia of that time . . . [Tewodros's] position was so undermined that its collapse was regarded as a question of time. When the British-Indian army arrived on the scene, neither threats nor persuasion was needed to induce the princes in northern Ethiopia to provide not only passive, but even active assistance. These circumstances alone can explain how the British army could march 650 kilometers into the country without meeting the slightest resistance and bring about a conclusion in a two-hour action where their own casualties amounted to twenty wounded, two of these fatally.⁸

This early impression of mine has refused to go away. Twenty years later I summarized my conclusions in *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*:

From the view point of Ethiopian history, Meqdela, as such, represents no more than an incident. A foreign army marched peacefully through the Ethiopian countryside to a mountain prison in the interior, fought a battle of two or three hours almost without casualties, released a number of prisoners and left again. At the same time, a ruler who, for reasons that had nothing to do with the campaign, was already a king "without land and almost without people" ended his life by committing suicide . . .

It is true, of course, that the promises of arms and of a speedy military withdrawal were important; but the revolts were open and of long standing, and the assistance provided by Kasa [of Tigray] was far from

passive. Moreover, precisely the promise of withdrawal and the assistance prove how wrong it is to speak of the British expedition as a conquest or occupation of Ethiopia, or even as a war against the country.

As the special conditions which alone could explain the easy victory of the British - with two dead in action - were played down and forgotten, the ease with which Ethiopia had been "invaded and conquered", in spite of topography and climate, was remembered. If, moreover, the great unifier had fallen so easily, what would his disunited successors . . . be able to do in the face of a new invasion? Out of the distorted interpretations was born a wrong opinion about Ethiopia in political circles in Europe and Egypt. Unless one takes into account a serious underestimation of Ethiopia's basic unity and military potential, it becomes very difficult to explain why the expeditions of the following decades were so incredibly insufficient.⁹

In fact, of course, both the Egyptian armies of 1875 and 1876 with their European and American officers and the Italian army of 1895-6 were several times larger than the British at Meqdela - and they were nevertheless decisively defeated. The fact that Italy was a second-rate colonial power compared with Britain and France is irrelevant. What the Ethiopians faced and defeated at Adwa was "the strongest colonial expeditionary force that Africa had ever known".¹⁰ The difference in outcome is due primarily to the fact that they *did* invade Ethiopia in order to conquer it. They were *enemies of Ethiopia* and were clearly understood to be so.

To assume that the Ethiopians of the late nineteenth century did not understand this difference is far-fetched indeed. Nowhere in the sources have I found any indication that Yohannis or Minilik or any other officers were preoccupied with the Meqdela incident either before or after the victories of Gundet and Gura or Dogali, Amba Alage and Adwa. This does not, however, mean that the Meqdela episode was forgotten or ignored in Ethiopia. It *was* remembered, but primarily because of the defiance and tragic fate of Tewodros personally, not because of the battle as such.

The Ethiopians have created *their* myth or myths about Tewodros. Of this I became much aware when I gave my first public lectures about his reign at the UCAA in April 1959. The response was extraordinary; the reactions much stronger than I had expected. There were two images of the man: the villain whose cruelty had known no limits and the national hero who embodied the spirit, virtues and aspirations of the Ethiopian people.

The folklore and the oral traditions had received their first twentieth-century literary expressions in Girmachew Tekle Hawariyat's drama *Tewodros* (1950) and Mekonnen Indalkachew's short novel *Taytu Bitul* (1957/58). While Girmachew

presents Tewodros with considerable sympathy, Mekonnen's novel can be best characterized as a political pamphlet written to defame the king. I can still remember how a great-grandson of Tewodros came to my house one evening in 1958 or early 1959 and pleaded with me to do something to refute Mekonnen Indalkachew's work. An opportunity to take a first step in that direction by emphasizing the difference between fact and fiction arose after one of those early lectures on Tewodros. Someone in the audience challenged my presentation with the question if I did not know that there were people in high positions who knew Tewodros's history much better than I did, and cited *Bitwedded* Mekonnen's novel as evidence. Fortunately, I could point to the author's own description of his book as *libb welled tarik*.¹¹

The 1960s saw a tremendous rise in interest in the person of Tewodros with Tsegay Gebre Medhin's play *Tewodros* (1963) and the historical novels of Berhanu Zeryihun and Abbe Gubeñña entitled *Yetewodros Inba* (1966/67) and *And Lennatu* (1969) respectively as the most noted literary contributions.¹² This was paralleled by a remarkable revival of scholarly interest in the personality and politics of Tewodros. Once his contemporaries, Ethiopian as well as foreigners, had chronicled the events of his life and reign as far as they knew them - and that meant the experiences of the Europeans and the Meqdela expedition in particular - practically nothing was written about Tewodros for almost a century. He obviously received the pages due to his reign in the general histories of Ethiopia, but all I can recall that was explicitly devoted to Tewodros is a biographical sketch by T. Nöldeke in 1892.¹³

In retrospect it is easy to see that the revival of interest in the personality and policies of Tewodros in the 1960s owed much to the new political climate in Ethiopia. The young in the schools and colleges were more or less consciously looking for a new hero, someone who would be a better symbol for their ideals and aspirations for Ethiopia than the aging emperor and his men. Though I had no conscious desire to participate in the resurrection of a national hero, I was sufficiently aware of this climate to dedicate my short biography implicitly and explicitly to my students. It was only later, and not surprisingly through *Dejjazmach* Girmachew, that I was informed how displeased the Emperor was that a professor at his university had spent time on the biography of a usurper.

Many scholars contributed very actively to the rising interest in and growing knowledge about Tewodros. *Ethiopia Observer* published a number of articles, both by Richard Pankhurst himself and others. The question of continuity versus renewal was raised by M. Morgan¹⁴ and D. Crummey, who also analyzed the complicated personality of the king in an important article in 1971.¹⁵ Luigi Fusella translated and published what has become known as the anonymous Tewodros chronicle.¹⁶

A number of contemporary narratives were republished for the one-hundredth anniversary of the Meqdela expedition; Henry Blanc's was even translated into Amharic.¹⁷ Also the new books that have appeared in English focus primarily on the conflict with Britain and the expedition. This is as true of the novels¹⁸ as of the scholarly accounts.¹⁹ Of the latter, *The Abyssinian Difficulty* by Bates is by far the most interesting for an Ethiopian reader. His use of the less known reports of journalists who accompanied the expedition has supplemented the picture of what happened at Meqdela in several ways. His description of the arrival and reception by the British soldiers, first of Rassam and his staff and then the whole European colony in Ethiopia, is both enlightening and amusing. As for the assault on Meqdela and the death of the king, he concludes that though it was "generally reported as a great victory for British arms . . . there was in truth, as one staff officer put it 'little of stirring military incident or military prowess to record'. The Times correspondent, who tried hard to be fair and forgiving, added sadly: 'as a patriot, perhaps the less I say of this siege the better'."²⁰

One issue over which there was much controversy at the time is whether Napier, in order to get all the Europeans safely to his camp, deliberately deceived Tewodros into believing that his peace offering of 1,000 cows and 500 sheep for Easter would be accepted as such and that Tewodros would therefore be spared an attack on his fortress. Napier defended himself against the accusation by saying that Tewodros's letter mentioned only "a few cows" and that he had been led to believe that the gift in that case was of no significance.²¹

The problem is that Napier originally reported that Rassam and some others had simply "acquired the impression" that he had accepted the "offering of a few cows", and that Waldmeier, who was also present, recalled that Napier had said that he would refuse to accept them *until* all the foreigners had reached his camp in safety. According to Markham, finally, there were two translations of the sentence about the gift in Tewodros's letter of Easter Sunday, the one with "a few cows" and another with "1,000 cows and 500 sheep, as a breakfast for the troops".²² The fact that the Amharic originals of the two letters which Tewodros wrote to Napier on 11 and 12 April never reached the official archives and have eluded discovery until now made many, including myself, suspicious about their exact content.

It is therefore a cause of great satisfaction that the originals of these very important letters have finally surfaced and been published.²³ We now know that Markham was wrong: Tewodros's written message has no numbers and no reference to the British troops. Nor does it, however, have any word corresponding to "a few". It reads, "Today is Easter, so permit me to send you heifers."²⁴ This does not prove that Tewodros was not deceived, only that Napier may not have known the size of the gift when he stated that he believed the matter to be of no consequence.

The other letter is in fact of greater interest. It was written on Easter Saturday, the day after the disastrous battle of Aroge and just before Tewodros's unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide. It is a strange document in many ways, and although there has never to my knowledge been any doubt about its authenticity, the absence of the original has bothered me ever since I first quoted the English version in "Maqdala och Bogos". The personality of Tewodros was at that time marginal to my theme but this text fascinated me and I could not help commenting:

It was probably intended as his testament, a defeated man's last words to posterity. He had already shed his imperial titles. It was only "Kasa, whose trust is in Christ" that spoke. He rebuked his people for having fled in the battle and for having turned their backs on him when he imposed tax on them and tried to introduce law and order. He declared a last time that the goal of his life had been to gain universal supremacy and conquer Jerusalem. Now he was determined to die . . . "A warrior who has dandled strong men in his arms like infants will never suffer himself to be dandled in the arms of others."²⁵

Since the letter was sent in reply to Napier's demand that he surrender, the last sentence, as well as some passages earlier on, carried the message that he would commit suicide rather than hand himself over to the British. Whether this was understood by the British commander or not is another matter.

Now that the Amharic original has been found and published, the impression that this letter was written (in fact dictated) by someone who was literally at his wits' end is confirmed. The translation is substantially correct though far from literal. The scolding of his countrymen is there - for resistance against his policies, for lack of courage in the final battle (which was certainly unfair) and for accusing him of apostasy. So are the references to his great ambitions and plans, including the delivery of Jerusalem from the hands of the Turks. But the language is more terse and the tone is much more subdued than in the English text. The impression remains that Tewodros accepted the outcome basically as his own personal failure; therefore "Kasa, whose trust is in Christ" instead of "King of Kings Tewodros" - and the expressed wish that God would grant his people "something good out of the evil I have done". A significant mistranslation at the time concealed the fact that Tewodros expressed the same kindly sentiments towards his enemies, the British. He wrote, "[You] people, who have spent the night in joy, may God not make you like me", in other words not permit the British to suffer defeat as Tewodros himself had done. The translation has the unforgiving " . . . may God do unto you as He has done to me."²⁶

In his final hours of despair, Tewodros was looking back across the years of hard work: the introduction of new technology, the roads and the cannon; the attempts to create a disciplined army and a modern administration, even a more enlightened and tolerant attitude in religious matters; the many battles he had fought, in person, in order to unify the country in the face of external threats which he perceived clearer than his countrymen. It was all there in that letter which he believed to be his last. When he decided to use "Kasa" and not "Tewodros", it must also mean that he had returned in his thoughts to the days of his youth when everything had seemed possible.

The assault on Meqdela and Tewodros's suicide are dramatic events which no playwright or novelist would like to omit when writing about Tewodros. Second only to the tragic end, as a source of inspiration, is the rise to power of young Kasa. The blend of fact and fiction is apparent in the very first description of his character and early exploits. He is the king who hates adultery, wealth, dishonesty, robbery and all kinds of fraud; who fears God; who is extremely generous; who loves the stranger and comforts the one who is ill; who has taken communion with one wife. When he escapes to Qwara as a rebel, he has *twelve* followers. He teams up with a band of *seventy* robbers and asks them to cooperate with him. When they break the agreement, he and his twelve defeat the seventy and mutilate seven whom they have captured.²⁷

In the first flashback of McCann Smith's novel, the seventeen-year-old Kasa is becoming aware that he is different from his companions in the church school where he has grown up. TWELVE appears to him in a kind of vision: "Twelve what?" he heard himself asking. The answer came from all around, or perhaps from inside: TWELVE DISCIPLES.²⁸

The experience is followed by Kasa's first battle, and as his life unfolds and dreams and visions multiply, he becomes increasingly aware of his destiny as "the elect of God". Partly it is the lack of factual knowledge about Tewodros's early life that has provided the vessel for the heady mixture of mysticism and adventure which runs through the stories or myths of young Tewodros.

We are, however, learning more and more also about the historical Kasa who was, figuratively speaking, the father of Tewodros. The most important, not to say only, *primary* sources that have come to light in recent years which shed light on the aspirations and activities of Tewodros before he made his bid for supreme power in 1852-55 are some letters found in the National Archives of Egypt. As they too have already been published and to some extent analyzed,²⁹ I will limit myself here to just a few interesting aspects.

On the one hand the letters confirm certain features of the Tewodros we know from chronicles and European narrative sources. He introduces himself as "the bravest of the brave and the greatest of horsemen (lit. the horseman of

horsemen)" or "him whom men fear and before whose fury heroes bow themselves on the day of battle and combat".³⁰ The pride of the successful warrior in his daring and his martial skills is clearly expressed, even in a context that has more to do with legal and diplomatic matters than warfare. He definitely wanted and regarded himself entitled to a great future. On the other hand we find absolutely no references to visions or any hints about destiny. In addition to the self-confidence born from success, his expectations are based on ancestry: "O our brother," he writes to the governor-general of the Sudan, "kingship has been awaiting us from generation to generation [for] about twenty *sultans* before Maru and before Kinfu. Our sovereign rights date from time past. They are old, not new."³¹ Coming from Tewodros himself more than seven years before he proclaimed himself king of kings, these statements cannot be ignored. And they call for a re-evaluation of Tewodros's background or at least of his self-image. I feel inclined to regard the genealogies in his grandson Kasa Meshesha's family chronicle with less scepticism than I did in the 1960s when I discarded them, partly because they did not bring him "within range of a ruling monarch for seven generations backward" and partly because genealogies can be invented, as we all know. Tewodros's own statements combined with a family tree which connects Tewodros on the purely male line with Seyfe Arad in the middle of the fourteenth century, which means twenty generations of twenty-five years in average, must be taken a little more seriously than I did. At any rate I would no longer write that "Tewodros's eventual royal ancestry . . . played no role whatsoever in his rise to power."³²

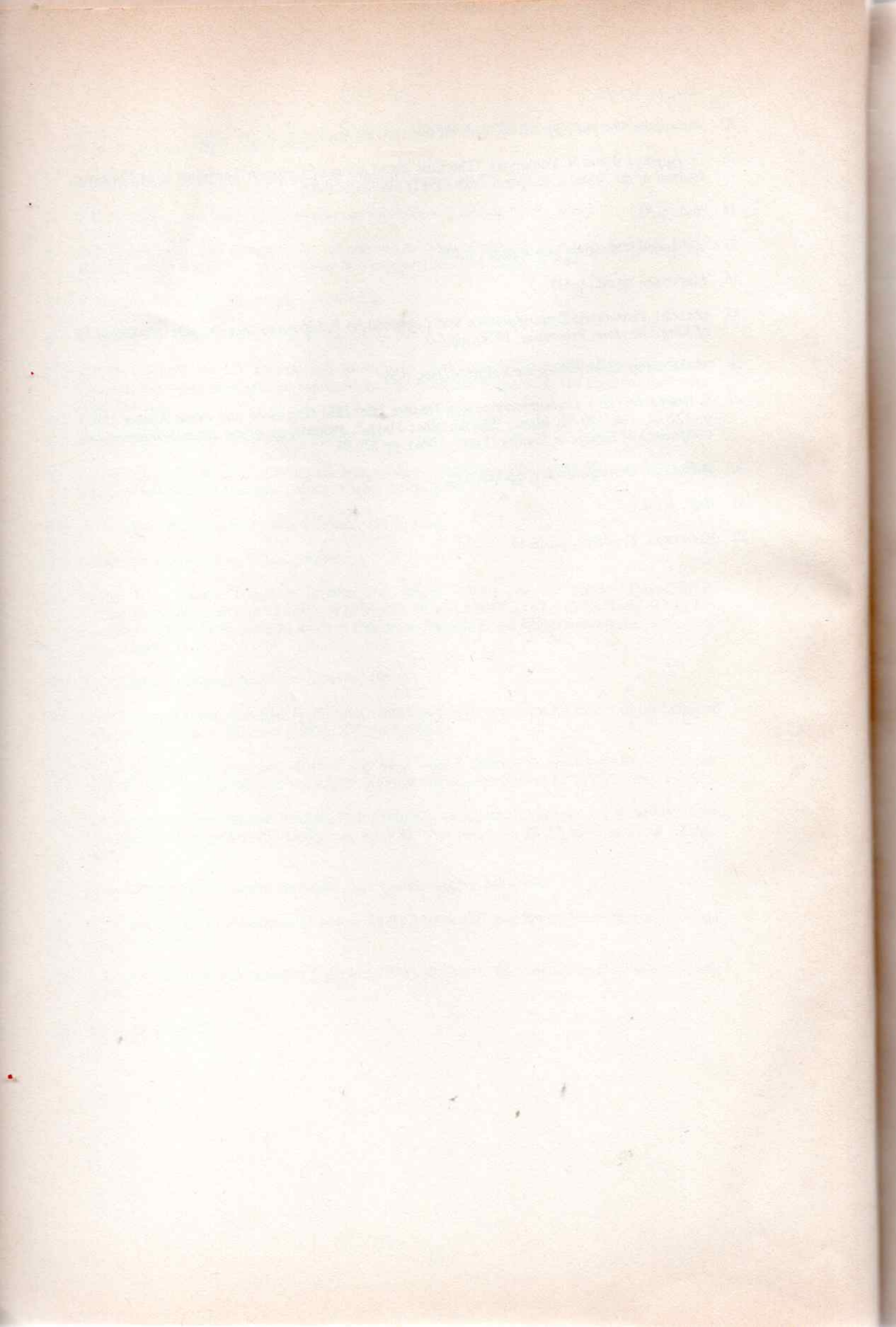
Finally and more importantly, Tewodros's early letters present us with a common-sense, realistic politician who suggested ways and means of solving conflicts with his Muslim neighbours by peaceful means. The image of Tewodros as an unbending religious crusader is certainly not supported by these letters, nor is the concept of a Messiah. Probably all that came later and from the environment rather than from Tewodros himself.

In order to commemorate the anniversary of his death it may be sufficient to revisit the king of kings in his despair at Meqdela or to ponder for a while how the drama began. In the final analysis, however, it is the society which shaped the man that has to be more fully understood. And this is a demanding task which requires both a stubborn determination to unearth more and better evidence of what people actually said and did and a readiness, if necessary, to discard cherished myths or generally accepted interpretations.

NOTES

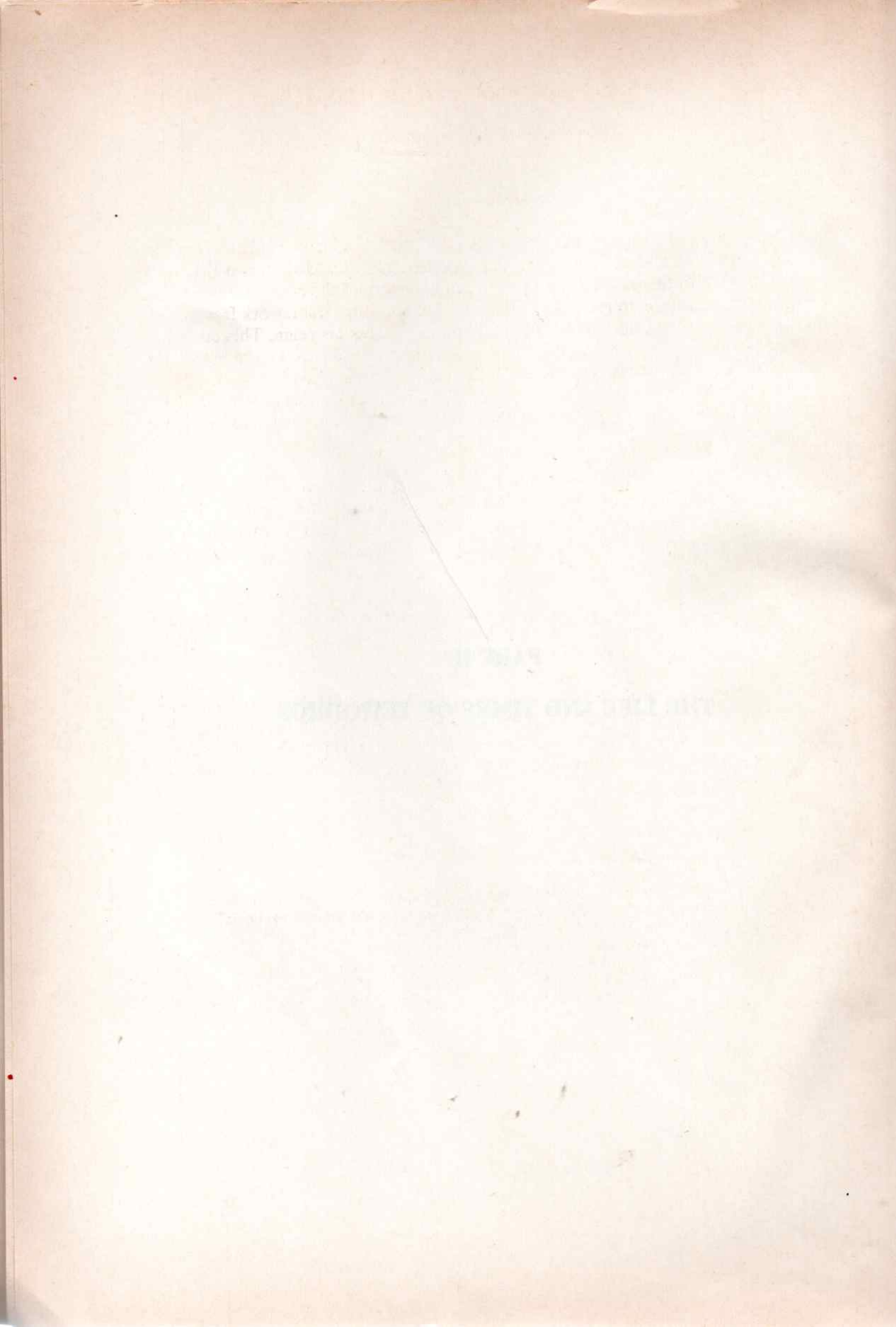
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7. P.R.O., FO 1/20, fol. 215. This fact has passed unnoticed by most if not all British writers about Meqdela most probably because *niguse negest* was rendered "Negoos" in the English translation (fols 217-18).
8. Rubenson, "Maqdala och Bogos", pp.107-108.
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12. In his M.A. thesis, "Tewodros in historical fiction" (1980) and the article "Tewodros in Ethiopian historical fiction", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, (1983), XVI, 115-28, Taye Assefa has analyzed these contributions to modern Ethiopian literature and elaborated on the motives of the authors.
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18. A. Schlee, *The Guns of Darkness* (London, 1973); Mason McCann Smith, *When the Emperor Dies* (New York, 1981).
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23. D. Appleyard and R. Pankhurst, "The Last Two Letters of Emperor Tewodros II of Ethiopia", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1987), no.1, pp.23-42.
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25. Rubenson, "Maqdala och Bogos", p.104.
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27. [Zeneb], *Yetewodros Tarik* (Amharic text published by E. Littmann with the title *The Chronicle of King Theodore*, Princeton, 1902), pp.5-7.
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29. S. Rubenson (ed.), *Correspondence and Treaties 1800-1854* (Evanston and Addis Ababa, 1987), pp.122-24, 126, 130-31; *idem.*, "Shaykh Kasa Haylu", *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Lund, 1984), pp.279-84.
30. Rubenson, *Correspondence*, pp.123, 131.
31. *Ibid.*, p.131.
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PART II.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TÉWODROS



The State in the Zamana Masafent (1786-1853):

An Essay in Reinterpretation*

Shiferaw Bekele

Tewodros was one of the towering figures of 19th century Ethiopia. His career, activities and achievements, put together, are regarded as constituting a clear break with the past, a turning point in the history of the country. It is clearly important, therefore, to reconstruct the social and political framework from which he emerged in order to fully understand him and assess his reign. This essay has a rather modest objective: to re-establish the political setting of the era before the coronation of Tewodros. The period is referred to as the *Zamana Masafent* and conventionally it existed from 1769 to 1855. The principal problem with which we grapple in this essay is: what was the nature of the state that existed in the Zamana Masafent?

Scholars have studied the period from one angle or another. Some of these studies constitute solid contributions to Ethiopian Studies¹. But the political history of the era has not been the subject of an extended study. What we have so far are general surveys or brief introductions very often as a background against which to tackle a specific theme².

All these surveys however share certain basic interpretations and assumptions though they differ from one another in emphasis. The characterizations of the period could be summarised as follows:

1. The *Zamana Masafent* was the period when Ethiopia was divided within itself into several regions with no effective central authority; in other words, the state "had collapsed" or "disintegrated".³ The most powerful lords in the 1830s and 40s were Ali II, Webé and Sahlä Selasé with Gošu, Kenfu and the Wällo lords playing second fiddle.⁴

* This essay is a much expanded version of the original paper entitled "Changes in the Structure of the Ethiopian State (mid-18th to mid-19th c.)". I am especially grateful to Ato Täklä Sadiq Mäkurya, Dr. Kenäfa Regeb Zäläqä, Ato Abäbä Feseha, Ato Agänähu Gäbäyähü and Ato Adhana Hayle who have either discussed with me one or another point raised in the paper or kindly gave me access to materials they possessed. In the course of revising the paper for publication I have benefited much from the critical comments of C. Schaefer of the University of Chicago. The comments and encouragements of my brothers, Solomon and Yared, were extremely helpful.

jusqu'à Ankober.¹⁹* But the degree of authority exercised over these provinces showed considerable variation.

What d'Abbadie called the "suzerainité effective" of the *Ras Ali* extended, at the time of his arrival in 1838, over the central provinces of Wälo, Wära Himāno, Yäju, Wag, Lasta, Wadla, Dälanta, Amara Saynt, Bägémder, Gojam, Damot, Agäw Meder, Dämbeya and Qwara²⁰. In fact, he lists all the governors of these provinces and defines them as the "vassaux"²¹ or "principaux feudataires" of *Ras Ali II*²². They were Kenfu, Gošu, Beru, Ahmädé, Faris Aligaz, Wäsän, Bäšir and a few other not so well-known figures.²³ Some, if not all, of these lords are very often presented in the scholarly literature as independent lords of the *Zamana Masafent* or as lords on a par with *Ras Ali* and King Sahlä Selasé of Šäwa²⁴.

Arnaux d'Abbadie places Webé in a class of his own. He first gives a historical sketch of the rise of Webé to prominence in which he tries to demonstrate that all along - 1826 to the end of the 1840s - Webé was the "vassal" of the Yäjus but their authority over him was not very strong for much of this period²⁵.

Indeed, he enjoyed tremendous autonomy, more autonomy than any of the other vassals of the *Ras*. Plowden also informs us that he paid to Ali "an annual tribute of 8,000 dollars as his feudal superior."²⁶ He was also under obligation to send military contingents to his overlord if and when the latter required it²⁷. Apart from this, we are told, he was absolute master of all the provinces under him. This tremendous internal autonomy sets him apart from the other lords of the time. If one fully accepts Plowden's and d'Abbade's testimonies, then it goes without saying that Ali was a ruler, a "head of state".

The picture that we get from these two sources is more than sufficient to formulate a thesis. *In the period known as Zamana Masafent there was a state ruled by the Yäju Masafent. Hence, it can be called Masfenate (to be pronounced Mäsfenét). Its genesis goes back to the mid-18th C. Structurally, there are important differences between the monarchical state and the Masfenate. Tewodros's main achievement was the overthrow of the Wära Séh state and the restoration of the monarchical state.*

This article will address itself to these issues.

The major problem is the scarcity of sources that shed light on these themes. But there are several scattered references which provide, when pieced together, considerable support to the observations of our two European eyewitness informants.

* Translations of French and Amharic texts are given in the notes.

In the treatment of this theme, however, the strictly chronological approach is not used. Several strands are singled out and developed on their own. Unfortunately, however, it involves a back-and-forth movement in order to better handle the issues under discussion. The writer has assumed that the reader has a knowledge of the general history of the period.

Before proceeding into the discussion, a comment is in order on the two concepts - vassal and suzerain - that will be used much in the course of the development of the thesis. Both were developed in order to explain relationships within the feudal class of Europe. In this context vassal stands for "a person under the protection of another who is feudal lord and to whom he has vowed homage and fealty: feudal tenant." And suzerain is "a superior feudal lord to whom fealty is due: overlord." These are very simplified definitions given by *Webster Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (1963)²⁸. For the purpose of this essay however, they suffice.

These terms are not used here in this sense. The social and political system that obtained in Ethiopia was decidedly not feudalism. Viewed from a distance, it is true, it looks like one. But a closer and careful look can clearly identify many more differences than similarities.²⁹ It is however outside of the scope of this essay to elaborate these points³⁰.

The concepts of "vassal" and "suzerain" are used here in their much wider sense. Vassal stands for a hereditary *ruler* of a region who pays tribute to another lord periodically, attends on him in his court at given times of a year and is in duty bound to participate at the head of his army in the wars of his superior. In other words, vassal is a tributary ruler rather than a feudal tenant. Hence, vassal and tributary lord are used alternatively in this study. Suzerain is applied for an overlord who forces a ruler of a region to recognise his overlordship by paying him tributes annually, by attendance in his court and by assisting him in his wars. In return for this, the vassal is left free in his own domain. The various governors of Ali Jr. were therefore his tributary lords and himself their suzerain. This was basically the relationship.

Another term that perhaps needs to be precisely defined has to do with the appellation of the dynasty. Very often it is called Yäju dynasty. There is no problem with this name except that it at times creates confusion with the Yäju province. It is preferable to call them by the name that they themselves preferred and by what others called them: Wärä Séh. This appellation clearly refers to the family rather than to the province.

Scholars now agree that of the Wārā Sēh rulers, Gugsā's reign (1800-1825) was characterized more by peace than by war³¹. Upon his death, a contemporary chronicler tells us, Gugsā "had ruled the whole world except Shewa and Tigre"³².

But the chronicler himself tells us that some of his information was second-hand³³ which cautions us to countercheck this statement. On the other hand, Zānāb repeats much of the same thing when he wrote "ገገሃም".

በገምድርን ገጃምን ወሉንም ሁሉንም ገዙ ሞቱ ³⁴ But what does "ሁሉንም" mean? Does it include Semén, Tegray and other provinces not included in this list? Since Zānāb is rather laconic and vague, one has to look for other sources. It is noteworthy, however, that both the chronicler of the *Zamana Masafent* and Zānāb use the word "ruled" which indicates government and state. Later traditional Ethiopian historians follow in the footsteps of Zānāb.

Alāqa Tayā gives a detailed list of the provinces which correspond to the provinces listed by Zānāb³⁵. Ašmé, on the other hand, adds Tegray to the list of Zānāb: "ራስ ገገሃም ... ገዢዎን በገምድርን ትገራን ጽጌ ዓመት ተገዥ ገዢ ³⁶". The problem of Ašmé and Tayā as sources is that they were not independent of each other. Tayā had seen Ašmé's manuscript.³⁷ Ašmé had in turn consulted Zānāb's chronicle.³⁸ But this does not diminish the value of Ašmé and Tayā as sources.

Ašmé was born most probably sometime in the middle of the 1830s.³⁹ As a man who grew up in the last decades of the *Zamana Masafent*, Ašmé would know the realities of the period. He would therefore be regarded as a primary source himself. Tayā (1860-1924), to be sure, came a little later. But his acceptance of this interpretation definitely lends weight to it even if Tayā does not include Tegray in his list. There is no doubt that there was a considerable number of eyewitness informants whom Ašmé and Tayā could have interviewed in order to countercheck the statements of Zānāb.

It is therefore quite clear that Ethiopian sources, both contemporary and secondary, definitely confirm the statements of Plowden and d'Abbadie. With regard to the central provinces there seems to be no doubt. Nevertheless, since both Zānāb and Tayā leave out Tegray, it is necessary to investigate at some length the position of this region in the whole system.

Nathaniel Pearce was with *Ras Wäldä Selasé*, ruler of Tegray (c.1790-1816) from 1805 until the latter's death in 1816. Pearce's accounts clearly show that Wäldä Selasé was the bitter rival of Gugsā⁴⁰. He planned a number of campaigns which he did not however carry out.⁴¹ A curious letter has survived which was written by Wäldä Selasé to Henry Salt sometime in September, 1815 - that is, towards the end of his rule. The Tegrean lord informs his correspondent that "as

for submission, everyone has submitted. If only you would come, we would talk about what is in our minds, and going up into the Amhara country and travelling around, we would see the whole country."⁴² In his previous letters, Wäldä Selasé had informed his correspondent that a campaign to Amhara was imminent⁴³. But this time he proposed to Salt that they should go sight seeing to Gondar, that is, to the land of his erstwhile enemy. The "submission" must also include his own submission to Gugsä.

Whatever it was, Wäldä Selasé died not long after this letter⁴⁴. Pearce's diaries clearly show that Tegräy was far from being under the rule of Gugsä. The years following the death of Wäldä Selasé witnessed a protracted power struggle among the various claimants to the Tegräian *alga*⁴⁵. It was in 1822 that Subagadis emerged as its occupant.⁴⁶

What was the relationship of Subagadis to Gugsä and to his successors? This is a rather difficult question to answer because there are to my knowledge no sources which have a direct bearing on it. But there are other sources which definitely suggest solutions. These are six *gult*-granting charters within the *Liber Axumae* collection⁴⁷. These charters can be divided into three categories.

Only one charter belongs to the first category.⁴⁸ It is the most interesting from the point view of the theme of this paper. It was given by "our king Gigar and Ras Gugsä." In other words, it was Gugsä who was actually doing the granting. It would be belabouring the obvious to state that the puppet king Gigar did not exercise any authority at all. The grant was to Subagadis. The *gults* and lands were all in Tegräy but some of the areas were in Agame itself, the home base of the Tegräian lord, the province at any rate where he was supposed to be the supreme ruler. If Gugsä could give him *gult* in his own home province, then there is no doubt that Gugsä was his overlord or suzerain. Otherwise there could be no need for the charter.⁴⁹

There are three charters in the second category. Two of them were granted by Gigar to two individuals who were granted land in Agame at a time when the governor was Subagadis himself.⁵⁰ The third was a grant to a church in Agame and it actually mentions the order of precedence "*ras* Gugsä being *ras*; and our *dajazmach* Subagadis"⁵¹.

The remaining two charters belong to a third category because the granter was Subagadis himself. In one of them he mentions Gigar⁵² and in the other there is a reference to "*the ras beht wadad* Imam."⁵³ While Gugsä's rule extended from 1803 to 1825, his son and successor ruled only for three years (1825-1828). These documents very strongly indicate that at a point in his career, Subagadis had acknowledged the suzerainty of Gugsä and later of his son, Yimam. Otherwise, there was no point in getting these documents drawn.

Nevertheless, more questions are raised than answered by this conclusion. How did Subagadis submit? What exactly were his obligations as a vassal? To what extent was the vassalage strong? The sources that I know of do not help us find answers to these queries. At any rate, the above documents suggest that Ašmé must have been right when he included Tegräy within the list of provinces "ruled" by Gugsä. Unfortunately, Ašmé does not indicate his source.⁵⁴

Moreover, there are further leads in this same direction when we see in what ways our sources explain the battle of Däbrä Abay or May Eslamay of 1831. The death of Gugsä in 1825 and that of Yimam in 1828 seemed to have generated a series of rebellions which could be described as succession strifes. The major battles of these years will be dealt with later. At this point the focus is on Subagadis.

Following the death of Yimam in 1828, his brother Maryé succeeded to the *alga*. It was probably at this time that Subagadis and Webé of Semen and perhaps the other Christian lords started to talk among themselves of a concerted rebellion. A coalition seemed to be in the making. Nevertheless, Maryé forestalled it by acting swiftly.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, our sources are not forthcoming with details. None of the published travellers who recounts the series of events that led up to Däbrä Abay was present in the country at the time.⁵⁶ Nor did they collect carefully oral traditions with a view to the reconstruction of the events. We are, therefore, left with the only alternative of piecing together bits and pieces of evidence scattered in several sources.

The Italian officer, Perini, who collected tradition in Hamasén at the end of the 19th c., the Šāwan Ašmé who most probably drafted his book in the last quarter of the 19th c.⁵⁷ and the Gojamé chronicler Tāklä Iyāsus who wrote his accounts most probably in the last decades of the 19th and in the first decade of the 20th c give a surprisingly similar explanation for the conflict between Subagadis and the Wārä Sēh in spite of the fact that they were far removed from each other at the time of compilation and writing. According to Perini, Maryé asked Subagadis to pay him his tribute; the latter refused upon which Maryé went on a campaign to bring him to heel. Ašmé also writes in much the same vein:

"ደጃዝማች ለባጋደስ በርትቶ ጋሎችን [the Wara Seh] ንቶ አልገበረም ስለዚህ ራስ ግርዩ ዘመተበት። Tāklä Iyāsus said the same thing in different words
"በዚያን ጊዜ ለብሉ ጋደስ ሸረተና ... ተዋጉ ራስ ግርዩ ድል አደረገ"⁵⁸

Perhaps, a weakness of these sources *qua* sources is that they were redacted a long time after the event. On the other hand, they cannot be dismissed out of hand because they were traditions collected from three different regions. Together, they do certainly show that Subagadis was a tributary lord of the Wārä Sēh. As such, they provide a confirmation to the conclusions drawn above from the *gult* charters.

They also point to the cause of the battle of Däbrä Abay. The three prominent historians of the period (Rubenson, Abir and Crummey) give a rather different explanation. Subagadis had emerged by 1831 as the most powerful rival of Maryé and hence assumed the role of "champion of Christianity in northern Ethiopia"⁵⁹. In order to overthrow the Islamophile Wära Séh dynasty under whom Islam was expanding and to impose his "own overall hegemony"⁶⁰ he formed in 1830 a loose coalition with the Christian and Amhara lords of the country. "... Forewarned of the plot," however, Maryé acted swiftly and fought with them one by one.⁶¹ Thus he was able to defeat them. After they were defeated they switched alliance to Maryé. They joined him in his march to Tegray "to put an end to the Tigrean threat"⁶² and on 14 February 1831 this combined force met Subagadis alone at Däbrä Abay in which not surprisingly he was decisively defeated.⁶³ Thus Abir and Crummey single out Däbrä Abay as one of the two most important battles of the latter *Zamana Masafent* principally because "all the major nobles participated in the battles."⁶⁴

This interpretation is based on the assumption that these lords were independent lords in spite of the fact that the Wära Séh were "predominant" or exercised "hegemony"⁶⁵. "Predominant applies", defines *Webster Dictionary*, "to something that exerts, often temporarily, the most marked influence." A person or country could be predominant but it does not exercise effective authority over the predominated person or country. Hegemony is "a preponderant influence or authority of one nation over others", according to the same dictionary. The various lords did therefore have full powers to enter into or break alliances depending on their interests or strengths. If one accepted the basic assumptions of Abir and Rubenson, one would also accept the validity of their interpretations of the events that led to Däbrä Abay or for that matter of all the other events of the *Zamana Masafent*.

Nevertheless, as I have tried to argue above and as I will demonstrate further below, the power of the Yäju rulers was much more than predominance. They exercised actual authority over the other lords. The latter were their tributary lords and the Yäjus were suzerains or overlords. Gošu participated in the battle of Däbrä Abay not as an ally but as a tributary lord or as a vassal. It was not by his own free will that he took part in the campaign but because it was his obligation *qua* vassal. Maryé had earlier fought against him and had subdued him.⁶⁶ Then it appears that he was reintegrated. In addition to paying tributes and attending on his overlord periodically at Däbrä Tabor, he had to join the *Ras Bitwädäd* when the latter went on a campaign. It was the same factor that explains Webé's participation⁶⁷ as well as that of the lords of Lasta, Wällo and Yäju.

Viewed in this context therefore the battle of Däbrä Abay takes on a rather different significance. It would be difficult, following Abir and Crummey, to take this battle as one of the two "central events" of the era. It was just one of the many battles that the Wära Séh fought to bring to line their recalcitrant vassals.

In many of their campaigns they were joined by their loyal tributary lords. Däbrä Abay was not special in this respect either. Nor was Subagadis different from the other rebellious lords.

It is perhaps worth pondering over the question of why Subagadis did not take on the title of *ras* if, as we are told, he was a lord on a par with the Yäju *rases*, his contemporaries. For that matter, none of the other powerful lords did also carry this title since Wäldä Selasé of Tegräy who was the last of the *rases* outside of the Wärrä Séh dynasty. Unless we argue that it was modesty which restrained Subagadis and all the other lords who rose to prominence after 1810 from assuming such a high title, we have to look for a more plausible explanation. There is only one exception which however serves to prove the rule. Wäsän Säḡäd, the lord of Šäwa (1806-1812), arrogated this title to himself without much ado. His son, Sahlä Selasé (1813-1847), followed suit.⁶⁶ But then the Šäwans were truly independent of Däbrä Tabor. Hence, the explanation to me is structural rather than personal.

The title of *ras* could be given only by a king or a king of kings.⁶⁹ Therefore, in this era an ambitious lord would find a *puppet Solomon* and declare that he would crown him king. It was mandatory that he should remove, or force to acknowledge him, the Wärrä Séh *ras*. Then the king would elevate him to a position of *ras*. Holding this title would entail that the other lords must recognize him as their suzerain.

In the absence of a king, however, like in the case of Šäwa, a lord could simply assume it provided he had no overlord who could prevent him from doing it.⁷⁰ If he had an overlord, then it would be upto the latter's wishes whether or not to bestow title and rank on his vassal. But then if this overlord himself carried the same title he would elevate his vassals only upto the title just below him. It was not proper to give the same title to one's vassal as one bore. If, however, the vassal simply proceeded and called himself a *ras*, or as very often happened, he got a puppet crowned as monarch who in turn created him a *ras*, it would be tantamount to an open defiance, to a declaration of rebellion. In order therefore to assume this title, a lord should first remove the *ras* from above him. In the process he would enter into coalition with other lords who were prepared to recognize him as the *re'esä mäkwant* i.e. their suzerain. Subagadis, Gošu, Webé Beru, Farris Aligaz - all tried but failed. Thus, from 1816 - the death of Wäldä Selasé, the last of the *Rases* of the 18th c. - to 1853, there was no *ras* other than the Wärrä Séh *Masafent* in the provinces north of Šäwa.⁷¹ It is highly suggestive that in the negotiations between Kassa and Webé in 1854, the former proposed that he would give Webé the title of *ras* if in turn the latter acknowledged him "as Atse"⁷². Of course, nothing came off these negotiations.

In any case, the fact remains that neither Subagadis nor the other lords could arrogate to himself this title so long as there were the Yäjus as *ras bitwädäd* which

in effect meant *re'esä mäkwanent*. An incumbent of this office must ensure that he was head of the governors; otherwise somebody else would kick him out of it without much ceremony. That Subagadis remained only *däjazmač* is therefore another indicator to his status.

- II -

Subagadis was succeeded by Webé, who came to be regarded, from the early 30s on, as one of the most powerful lords of Ethiopia. The only other lords who were as formidable and independent as he was, were Ali Jr. and Sahlä Selasé of Šäwa⁷³. Moreover, he is presented in the literature, both primary and secondary, as the major rival of Ali Jr.⁷⁴. The only serious challenge by Webé, the battle of Däbrä Tabor, is regarded as one of the two "central events" of the *Zamana Masafent*, the other being Däbrä Abay⁷⁵. It is therefore necessary to establish the place of Webé in the state system of the period. Hence, a general outline of his career will be presented here on the basis of the available documentation.

Webé succeeded to the *alga* of his father *Däjazmač* Haylä Maryam in 1826.⁷⁶ Haylä Maryam was the son of *Ras* Gäbré, governor of Semén. Gäbré was one of the *rases* of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, who had made a bid for supreme power and failed.

Gäbré did not succeed in imposing his overlordship over the country for an extended period of time. The short-lived success enabled him to get the title of *ras*. On the other hand, he managed to retain his independence by successfully resisting Gugsä and Wäldä Selasé. He died in 1815 whereupon he was succeeded by his son, Haylä Maryam.⁷⁷ Haylä Maryam was not destined to become a *ras*. He carried the title of *däjazmač* throughout his career as governor of Semén, Wägära and Wälqayt. When and how Gugsä succeeded in making Haylä Maryam his tributary lord, we do not know. The available sources are not very helpful. But we know that at a point in his career he married Gugsä's daughter, Hirut, from whom he had sons and a daughter who would later figure in the history of the country.⁷⁸

But he seems to have greeted his father-in-law's death as an opportunity for asserting himself to seize the *alga* of the land. Thus he declared a certain Bā'edä Maryam the *ašé* of the country and himself the guardian. But Yimam defeated him. His son Webé sat on his *alga*.

On his assumption of power, Webé seemed to have declared his allegiance to Yimam⁷⁹. Thus, as was pointed out above, he fought at Koso Bär in October, 1827 under the command of Yimam. Täklä Iyäsus and Ašmé have transmitted to us the tradition that not long after Koso Bär Webé himself declared his rebellion against Yimam. But Webé was defeated⁸⁰. Täklä Iyäsus is even more specific and tells

us that the fighting took place in Wägära⁸¹. It would perhaps be wise to wait for a corroborative evidence in order to take this information as accurate.

In any case, Yimam died in January, 1828⁸². His brother, Maryé succeeded him. The new ruler faced the same sort of problems that Yimam had been confronted with. Webé and Subagadis seemed to have arrived at some sort of understanding about a joint rebellion against Maryé⁸³. The latter called on them to acknowledge him as their suzerain. I have already tried to demonstrate Subagadis's motives as well as those of Maryé for fighting at Däbrä Abay⁸⁴. Our sources clearly suggest the motives of Webé. Täklä Yäsus and Ašmé use identical words "አልጋ ባገኝ ብሎ [ደጀቸው] ተነሰ" ⁸⁵

Arnaud d'Abbadie has also collected a similar tradition because he wrote that when Webé was summoned "par le Ras Marié de venir lui faire à Daba Tabor sa visite de foi et homage il s'y refusa."⁸⁶ Maryé marched on him and defeated him in June, 1830.⁸⁷ The *Ras Bitwädäd* did not appoint a new governor in his place. Rather he reinstated him apparently on profession of loyalty. D'Abbadie writes that Webé was reintegrated "en qualité de vassal."⁸⁸ Ašmé was more graphic in his expression: ከራስ ግርዶ ጋር እንጨት ከብላይ ተዋገገ፤ ደጀዝግቸው ይሉ ድል ሆነ ከዚህ በኋላ ውሴ ተስፋውን ተርግላና ሉሊ ሆነ⁸⁹.

Soon after this victory, Maryé launched his campaign into Tegray. It seems that he had called on all his tributary lords to join him.⁹⁰ The battle was fought at Däbrä Abay in Tegray on 14 February 1831. Webé was the avant-garde, according to Arnaud d'Abbadie.⁹¹ As was pointed out Subagadis was defeated. In the course of the battle, Maryé was "killed by a gunshot"⁹². Subagadis was however captured in the battle and was executed on the morrow in revenge for the death of Maryé. Dori, the brother of Yimam and Maryé, succeeded to the *alga*. Dori appointed Webé as the governor of Tigray in addition to his province of Semén.⁹³ Why did Dori "give", in the words of d'Abbadie, Tigray to Webé, the one time rebel? A definitive answer could not be given with the available sources. There are indications however that Maryé had already promised Webé Tegray upon a successful completion of the campaign in order to obtain his complete loyalty and to destroy his alliance with Subagadis⁹⁴.

Viewed at from the point of view of the state, however, one can give an analysis of the structural implications of this appointment. This addition of Tegray and Hamasén to Webé would indeed have short term advantages for the Wära Séh rulers while in the long run it would definitely have a dangerous consequence. The appointment of an Amhara lord who did not belong to any one of the three Tegrean ruling houses would entail the break-up of their independent mindedness and their aspiration for supreme power which had been a cause of much trouble for the Yäjus since at least the days of Wäldä Selasé who constantly challenged them.

Viewed in the long term, however, the addition of such a vast province was at the same time an offer of the command of an entire army that was spread out in the region⁹⁵. Unless a governor who had under his command such a big military resource was a trusted official, there was the highest probability that he would raise the standard of rebellion against his own masters. Indeed, he would be a most dangerous rebel as he had under him a very big army. It should not therefore come as a surprise that Webé turned out to be such a rebel more than once.

But in 1831, Webé was an obedient vassal. Not long after Ali II was instituted in his office, Faris Aligaz, the governor of Yäju province, raised the standard of rebellion. Combes and Tamisier, the French travellers who were in Ethiopia from 1833 to 1835 inform us that Mänän summoned Webé in October 1831 to join Ali's army in the campaign against *Däjazmač* Faris. Webé had to postpone his departure to Tegräy in order to obtain the submission of the recalcitrant Tegrean lords⁹⁶. Faris was defeated at the end of October 1831 even if he fled into the mountains. Webé then turned back and marched to Tegräy.⁹⁷

Between 1831 and 1838, Webé remained loyal. In fact, sometime in this period, he gave his daughter in marriage to Ali II which seems to have created an atmosphere of loyalty and closer ties between the two lords. Webé himself was busy consolidating his rule especially in Tegräy. The office-seeking members of the Tegrean ruling houses challenged his rule again and again for which reason he had to march to Tegräy repeatedly.⁹⁸ It was in 1838 that he succeeded at long last in chaining *Däjazmač* Kassay Subagadis who had been so much of a thorn on his side since 1831.⁹⁹ Thus he became the undisputed ruler of a large region from Wägära to Hamasén. Henceforth, he could call to arms a much bigger army than before. The quantity of firearms he had accumulated over the years seemed to have put him on a par with *Ras* Ali¹⁰⁰. He must have felt that he could challenge his suzerain¹⁰¹. "By the second half of 1838 it was an open secret that Dajazmatch Wube was actively plotting to overthrow *Ras* Ali," writes Abir.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the power of the *Ras Bitwädäd* was regarded as so formidable that he seems to have felt that he should be even more powerful. The purchase of firearms and the formation of a coalition with the disaffected tributary lords was on top of his agenda.¹⁰³

At this point, we have to turn to d'Abbadie who was in Gondar in 1838. His contacts being with all the right people, he gives us a very interesting analysis of the situation.

Il [Wube] protestait, il est vrai, de son obédience au *Ras* Ali, lui envoyait des présents, mais trouvait des prétextes pour se dispenser de faire à Dabra Tabor la visite annuelle de rigueur pour tour vassal; il s'attachait à capter par ses soins et ses libéralités le Waizero Manann et les membres du conseil de régence; il entretenait des intelligences avec Ali Farés, le

Dadjadj Connefo et d'autres feudataires de son Suzerain, et il les excitait à la rébellion contre cette maison de Gouksa qui, disait-il, finirait par réduire l'Éthiopie à l'Islamisme.

Cependant, l'opinion que le Ras allait prendre en main son pouvoir s'accréditait; on présageait que son premier acte serait de sommer le Dedjadj Oubié de venir à Dabra Tabor, et, en cas de refus, qu'il marcherait contre lui. On parlait aussi de la défection du Dedjadj Guoscho, dont le fils Birro, Fit-worari ou général d'avant garde du Ras (Ali), faisait déjà ombrage à son Suzerain. Cet état des choses causait une inquiétude générale, suspendant les relations de province à province, et empêchait les caravanes de trafiquants d'entreprendre des expéditions lointaines.¹⁰⁴

This analysis by a contemporary who in that same year visited the courts of Webé and Ali Jr., who lived in Gondar, and who talked with the personalities involved in the politics he describes is such a valuable evidence that a lengthy quotation is justifiable.

In the end, events did not turn out as was expected. Though widely rumoured, Gošu did not join Webé. The only important lords who collaborated with Webé were Beru Gošu and Faris Aligaz. Webé himself did not right away launch his march on Däbrä Tabor. He had troubles at home and he had to obtain an *Abun* and more firearms first. All of this took time. Even if d'Abbadie's predictive statements were not borne out by later developments, the substance of the analysis remains valid. That in essence Webé was declaring a rebellion to overthrow Wära Séh suzerainty and to seize supreme power could be taken for granted. Though initially he kept his true ambitions secret¹⁰⁵, many contemporary sources¹⁰⁶ unanimously assert that he had the intention of crowning himself king.

Finally, the *abun* arrived in 1841. And in late 1841 Webé set out to Däbrä Tabor. He was then joined by Beru Gošu. First they seized Gondar. Then they marched on Däbrä Tabor. On 6 February 1842, they met the armies of all those tributary lords still loyal to Ali under his command. But the latter was defeated. He fled the battlefield. Unexpectedly, *Däjazmač* Beru Aligaz (brother of Faris Aligaz) arrived at the battlefield with an army to assist Ali II. He found the victors celebrating their victory fully believing that their enemy was finished. Thus he was able to surprise them and even capture Webé and the *Abun*. Beru Gošu fled. Beru Aligaz then looked around for the whereabouts of Ali II. It took him a whole week to locate his master and to get him to Däbrä Tabor.

Upon his arrival in his capital Ali announced a *šum-šer*. Beru Aligaz was appointed to the governorship of Dämbeya; Märso Haylä Maryam, the half-brother of Webé, was given Semén and Tegräy. Ali went out of his way to win over the metropolitan. He was released and reinstated in his office.

None of these *šum-šers* were however long-lasting. Beru Aligaz's appointment aroused the resentment of Mānān because she had been the governor of this province for a couple of years¹⁰⁷. She right away went into a malicious intrigue against him and succeeded, in a short time, "à faire mettre Biro Aligaz en captivité et à se faire restituer l'investiture du Dambiya"¹⁰⁸. This is the testimony of our eye-witness informant, d'Abbadie, who was right in Gondar when all of these events were taking place.

Immediately following his appointment *Dājzmač* Mārso started out to his governorship of Semén and Tegray. But first he went to Gondar to pay homage to Mānān. He then set out to Semén where upon his arrival he issued the *awaj* of Ali that henceforth he was the governor. But not long after he did this and settled down to his job did Ali demote him and reappoint in his stead Webé, his erstwhile enemy. Of all the *šum-šers* of the year, this seems to have created the biggest sensations in Gondar and in the other provinces of the Masfenate¹⁰⁹. On the face of it, it looks like an incomprehensible move.

Another informant Lefebvre who had close contacts with Webé in those very years and d'Abbadie inform us that Webé had men in the court of Ali who were in his pay. Those men worked on Ali not only to get him released but also to reinstate him in his former provinces¹¹⁰. The *Abun* is also said to have insisted on the release and reinstatement of Webé as a condition for his reconciliation with Ali¹¹¹. In the end, Ali released his most dangerous enemy and reinstated him in all his former provinces. Webé quickly marched to Semén and issued the *awaj* of Ali that he had been reinstated¹¹². Mārso was not one to give in meekly and prepared to fight. Ali was forced to join his erstwhile enemy in order to crash his loyal vassal¹¹³.

What then was the significance of the battle of Dābrā Tabor? In spite of its dramatic turns and reversals, the battle and its consequences did not seem to be much different from the other major battles of the period. Only in one sense, it was different from them. The capital of the *Ras* was captured after he himself suffered defeat. His flight was also rather unbecoming. It can be said that the battle inflicted much damage on the reputation of the *Ras* and on the credibility of the Masfenate. In this sense, it presaged the last burning of Dābrā Tabor by the last rebel-vassal, Kassa Haylu, following the battle of Taqusa in April 1853. Apart from this it was like all the other battles and after it was all over, things moved back to square one.

Indeed, from 1842 to 1846, Webé did not try to throw off his vassalage. He fulfilled his obligations. It was in 1846 that troubles again arose between suzerain and vassal. Abir gives us a succinct account of how hostilities broke out:

During the rainy season of 1846, Ali, who was preparing for his annual expedition against Birru Goshu, called upon his tributary *Dejazmatch* Wube to send him funds and soldiers for the coming campaign. Wube, who was himself pestered with rebellions in Tigre and who was closely watching developments on the coast, used all kinds of pretexts in order not to comply with the commands of his master. The Ras, who had distrusted Wube since the battle of Debra Tabor and who was already in Gojam, recrossed the Abbay at the end of 1846 and advanced into Wogera.¹¹⁴

But it soon became clear that neither Ali nor Wube was capable of a sustained campaign. Both faced dangerous rebellions closer home. Egyptian threat was looming on the horizon. They were, particularly, anxious for cessation of hostilities in order to address themselves to the pressing rebellions before all else.¹¹⁵ Thus, about the middle of 1847, without even coming to grips with Ali, Wube submitted, paid tribute, and was reconfirmed as governor of Wogera, Semien, Wolkait and Tigre.¹¹⁶ He further agreed to give up a province which was meant to weaken him. He would pay annual tributes and he would send "part of his troops to the Ras's assistance whenever the latter should demand them"¹¹⁷.

After this agreement, Webé remained a vassal of Ali right upto the latter's fall in 1853¹¹⁸. In fact, Webé obeyed the summons of his suzerain to send an army early in 1853 which took part at the battle of Taqusa on 12 April 1853 which was fought against Kassa. In addition to Webé, Ali ordered *Däjazmač* Beru Aligaz and three other *däjazmačs* to fight against Kassa. He had earlier ordered Gošu to crush Kassa which ended in the defeat of the former at Gur Amba in November, 1852¹¹⁹. If anything, Gur Amba and Taqusa showed that Ali remained upto the end in good command of all the provinces he inherited.

It is true that Webé had his eyes on the throne and that he was the most formidable challenger of Ali II. But, paradoxically, he was among those recalcitrant tributary lords who gave the least trouble to his suzerain¹²⁰. Gošu, who became an obedient vassal after 1841, had been engaged in rebellion much more frequently than Webé. The latter after all rebelled only twice against Ali II. The record of troubles, however, that Beru Gošu and Faris Aligaz had, clearly shows that the years of Ali's overlordship over Ethiopia were disturbed more by them rather than by Webé¹²¹.

And yet, he was different in status than the other vassals. He seems to have had only two obligations to his master—payment of tributes and sending of a military contingent. He does not seem to be required to attend the court of his lord at Däbrä Tabor since 1842 while all the other lords were under obligation to do so. Moreover, he "had usurped the right of the Ras [Ali] to hear appeals from his province"¹²² which was not the case with the other vassals. In other words, he was the absolute ruler of his provinces and Ali's authority over him was much restricted.

Drawing analogy with *Negus Menelik*, would help us understand better the position of Webé. Menelik's obligations to Yohannes were very much similar to those of Webé. He had only two principal dues as a tributary - accept the summons of Yohannes to send a military contingent to assist the latter and to pay annual tributes. The 1878 Agreement between Yohannes and Menelik were in essentials similar to the 1847 agreement between Ali and Webé¹²³. Like Webé, Menelik was not expected to go on regular attendance to the court of Yohannes.¹²⁴ Rather, the latter came often to Wälo to meet his vassal. The furthest Menelik went was to Däbrä Tabor¹²⁵. The available documentation does not indicate that Yohannes exercised the right of appeal over the provinces subject to Menelik. Yohannes suspected, exactly as Ali did, that Menelik had his eyes on the imperial throne. In short, what Menelik was to Yohannes, Webé was to Ali. Yet, the vassalage of Menelik to Yohannes has never been questioned by historians. This analogy with Menelik helps us to underline two points - that firstly the existence of powerful lords in the country does not necessarily mean that there was no state. Secondly, there are certain structural similarities between the Masfenate and the monarchical state of Yohannes.

- III -

Plowden and d'Abbadie were therefore right in placing Webé in a different category. Though fragmented, the evidence that is brought together in this essay fully bears out the information they have given.

It has already been demonstrated that the lords of Gojjam after Märed Haylu were the vassals of the Wära Séh rulers¹²⁶. The Aligaz brothers - Beru and Faris, the lords of Wälo and Wära Himano, the Wagšum, the lord of Dämbeya and Qwara were all vassals. A good number of them might not have been happy with their status as tributaries. From time to time, they rebelled especially when circumstances seemed favourable. Usually, they tried to coordinate their rebellions. Thus they entered into "alliances" or coalitions for this purpose. They would then refuse to send tributes and/or march on Däbrä Tabor to topple their suzerain. Between the declaration of rebellion and its suppression, they would have full independence. Since the duration varies from one rebellion to another, sometimes lasting a few years, observers, especially travellers, are likely to mistake this for the feature of the entire era. For example, the years 1839-1842 can very well give this impression¹²⁷.

The major policy of the Yäju rulers was to forestall the formation of coalitions mainly by the classical tactic of divide and rule¹²⁸. This was the tactic for instance Yimam and Maryé pursued between 1826 and 1831 when a number of coalitions were formed against them. When they marched to war against rebellions lords, very often they summoned their other vassals to join them. There is evidence to

show that they promised to "give" the province of the rebellious lord to one or another of the loyal lords after the conclusion of the campaign. Thus, Webé was most probably promised Tegray when Maryé marched to suppress Subagadis. Gošu was promised Dämbiya and Qwarra when he was told to go and fight Kassa Haylu in late 1852. This kind of classic tactic served to drive a wedge between the tributary lords.

Thus, the Yäju could summon a big army from the various provinces. This army however gives the impression of a coalition army when viewed from a distance¹²⁹. But it is wrong to talk of formation of alliances and coalitions in the case of the Wära Séh. This term should be reserved to those who opposed them.

Perhaps the most difficult task for the political historian is to establish the extent of authority exercised by the Wära Séh over their vassals. Quite often our sources themselves are confused in the sense that they tell us at one and the same breath that the Yäju *masafent* had effective authority and that their authority was more nominal than actual¹³⁰. It is therefore important to see how much authority they exercised.

That at times they even chained some of the very powerful lords there is indisputable evidence. As I will try to demonstrate below, Dori "put in prison" *Däjazmačs* Kenfu and Amädé when he fell seriously ill. Later on, they were released by his successor, most probably by his regents.¹³¹ Of the several measures that Ali took following the fiasco and his re-entry into Däbrä Tabor in 1842, the case of Libän is most relevant to the discussion at hand. Libän was the son of *Däjazmač* Amädé, the governor of Wära Himäno. Amädé was not only the uncle of Ali but one of the grandees of his court having played a prominent role in the regency in the 1830s. When he died in 1838, his teenage son, Libän acceded to the *alga* with the approval of Ali.

When Webé and Beru Gošu were on the march to Däbrä Tabor, Ali had called upon his tributary lords to join him for the imminent battle. It was widely rumoured that Webé and his allies would beat Ali in the ensuing confrontation. Some of the vassals were reluctant to come to Ali. But Libän answered the call and took part in the battle. Following the defeat, he went back to his province. But when Ali was called by Beru Aligaz, he again summoned Libän who refused to comply this time because he and his counselors thought the fortunes of his suzerain "n'avoir que peu de chances de se relever" in those uncertain days. Contrary to the expectations of Libän and the Wära Himäno *mäkwanent* Ali was able to regain his *alga*. But no sooner had Ali re-established his authority than he put Libän "in chains" because of the latter's failure to answer his summons¹³². Libän was soon released and reinstated in his office. But what matters is not that he was released and reinstated but that Ali had the power to jail none other than a Wära Himäno chief who commanded a much feared cavalry.

The imprisonment at Mäqdäla of *Däjazmač* Märso should not come as a surprise¹³³. It would perhaps be apposite to mention in this connection a widely recited oral tradition from Gojam. In 1841 Beru Gošu quarrelled with his own father and the two went into battle. Täklä Iyäsus recounts it thus:

የደጃች ብሩጋና የደጃች ጉሹን ጦርነት ራስ አሊ በሰጣ ጊዜ ከደብረ ታቦር ገሰገሶ ጉጂም መጣ። አደት ከጊባላ አገር ላይ ሠፍሮ ገባ አለ። ደጃች ብሩ አልገባም ብሎ ሰጣ አምባ ገባ። ደጃች ጉሹ ገን እምነት አላፈርሰም ብሎ ገባ እራሱ አሊም ፈት ሹዋቴን እነሱም በታሸጉን ወገታቸው ገደላቸው። አሁን ደገሞ እናንተ በምን ሥራ ተዋጋችሁ። አባትና ልጅ ሰትማጤ ለኔ አትመጥኑኝም አትመቼኝም ብሎ ደጃች ጉሹን አሠረ። የዚህን ጊዜ ተሰጣ ጉሹ በአባቱ ሰንሰለት እኔ ተለውጠው ልታሠር ብሎ ራስ አሊን ለመነ። ራስ አሊም ተሰጣ ጉሹን አመሰግኖ በለውጥ አሠረና ደጃች ጉሹን ፈታለት። ... ደጃች ጉሹ ገን ለራስ አሊ ተመቼ። ራስ አሊም ልጁን ፈትቶለት በአገውና በቡረ ደጃዝግች ተሰጣ አሠኘው።¹³⁴

The full veracity of this tradition must have to be corroborated. But it is interesting as it stands first of all because it gives the Gojam version of the event. Secondly it clearly shows that both Gošu and Beru were the vassals of Ali II. Thirdly, it evinces that Ali exercised *šum-šer* functions over his tributary lords.

The Wärä Séh rulers required that their vassals attended their court, or so informs us d'Abbadie.¹³⁵ When they returned from their frequent campaigns, it was at Däbrä Tabor that they dismissed their principal tributary lords¹³⁶. Unfortunately, there is no attendance list to check on this piece of information. But there are some cases of attendance which go far to support the argument. For instance, sometime between 1838 and 1840 d'Abbadie met *Däjač* Bašir in the court of Ali. What is most interesting is the fact that Bašir addressed Ali as "Mon Seigneur" in spite of the fact that Bašir was the uncle of Ali and a very powerful governor of Wälo¹³⁷. This was in Däbrä Tabor. And on his way back to Gondar, our informant and his friend Liq Asqu heard that Gošu was on his way to Däbrä Tabor to "se mettre à la disposition de son suzerain"¹³⁸. This was at a time when there was talk of Webé's impending rebellion and Gošu's visit was certainly intended to express his allegiance to his suzerain. Plowden also informs us that Gošu had earlier taken Beru to Däbrä Tabor when he reached of age:

...Goscho... brought his son, then quite a young man, with him to the court of Ras Ali... From his high family, and the interest of the Queen [Menen], whom he [Birru] had found means to make his friend, the Ras gave him his sister in marriage, and the government and negarete of Nephsee¹³⁹.

But this Beru was an arrogant and ambitious man. He believed that he had more rights to rule Ethiopia than the upstart Wārā Séh. Nevertheless this was a difficult ambition to realize. But at least he found it difficult to swallow the fact of his being a vassal of a ruler he despised. This feeling came out one day in a *gugs* game with his suzerain during one of his attendances in the court. In the course of the game he slighted his suzerain who got furious. Therefore he had to flee to Gojjam where he became a rebel¹⁴⁰. Arnaud d'Abbadie who seems to have heard the same story from the Gojjam side tells us that normally Beru addressed Ali by saying "vous" and "Monseigneur"¹⁴¹. This incident may not be significant in itself but it is precious in this context because it sheds light on the nature of the relationship between the two lords.

In 1849, Plowden signed his Treaty with Ali II in Däbrä Tabor where he saw the Wagšum in the court. He saw that the "chief then came [into the house] and took leave, [of the Ras] receiving a handsome horse and the Ras took his shield from him..."¹⁴². Way back, during the rule of Gugsä, Täklä Iyäsus writes, *Däjač Gwalu*, the son of Ras Märed, ruled that the church he patronized gave **ጸብተርነት** to the "mäkwanent of Gugsä"¹⁴³.

All of what took place in Däbrä Tabor in February, 1842 may never be fully reconstructed due to scarcity of sources. But some of the anecdotes that d'Abbadie was told furnish valuable clues into the nature of the relationship between the lords. After the flight of Ali, Beru surprised his enemies and put them under control for a whole week while he was waiting for the return of his master. In the meantime, not only did he remain loyal to Ali but also saw to it that nobody else mounted the *alga*. At one point in the course of the week, he was said to have made the following speech to the lords who were in Däbrä Tabor in those critical days:

voilà le siège de notre suzerain. Jusqu'à ce que nous connaissions son sort, quel est celui d'entre nous qui se refusera à garder cet emblème de son autorité, pour l'y faire asseoir si Dieu nous le ramène, ou pour y faire monter son jeune fils, ou celui qu'il conviendra de prendre parmi ses autres héritiers?¹⁴⁴.

This was told to the French traveller by men who claimed to be eyewitnesses of these events. Times of crisis some times bring out the true relationship, the reality. This speech of Beru Aligaz, himself a lord in his own right, certainly demonstrates that it was lord-overlord or vassal-suzerain relationship rather than "alliance" or "coalition" that bound the lords with the Wārā Séh rulers.

When we join into a whole all these bits and pieces of evidence, a coherent picture definitely emerges - that the Wārā Séh did exercise authority over their vassals in addition to forcing them to pay tributes and to accompany them on military campaigns.

That the Yäjus exercised authority is further evidenced by the fact that they had the power (however limited) of *šum šer* over their tributary lords. This power was limited because more often than not they merely approved or recognized those who had already sat on *algas* either by force or by stratagem or by both¹⁴⁵. Following the appointment or the consent, it appears that the lords would repair with presents to Däbrä Tabor (or at times also Gondar) for the formal investiture¹⁴⁶. Theoretically, the *ras bitwädäd* gave or approved a title upto that of *Däjazmač*¹⁴⁷. The title of *ras* would as well be given by him but in principle this creation was within the traditional prerogative of the kingship. For example, *Däjač* Gošu had to proceed to Gondar in 1848 for the formal investiture even if it was actually Ali who created him a *ras*. But since the Yäjus would not ordinarily be willing to give this title as it would mean placing a tributary lord on an equal footing with them, the sole avenue to assume this title and the power and the glory that went with it, was to declare a rebellion, find a member of the Solomonic dynasty, crown him a puppet king who would in turn be ordered to create the lord a *ras* or a *ras bitwädäd*¹⁴⁸.

To carry the title of *ras* or *ras bitwädäd* was indeed very prestigious and as such attractive to any ambitious lord. But its prestige was not merely in the name. Nor did people fight to become *ras bitwädäd* or guardian of the king for its own sake, for its glitter and glory alone. To be *ras* meant that the lord was entitled to beat 88 *nägarits* whereas the most powerful *däjazmač* who governed a big province (e.g. the whole of Semén and Tegräy) was entitled to 44 *nägarits* only. Each *nägarit* signified that the lord had governorship over a district. To have more *nägarit* therefore denoted authority over more districts or on a bigger province. However, the 88 *nägarits* of the *ras* or *ras bitwädäd* signified authority over all the provinces from Wälo to Hamasén, from Gojam to the borders with the Sudan.¹⁴⁹

It was therefore mandatory on the part of the office holder to see to it that the lords of all the other provinces recognized his *ras*-ship if his title was not to remain empty and a mere pretension. The Amharic words that he used to ask them to recognise his office were " ገብ " or " ገብርኤል " ¹⁵⁰. The two terms especially the latter had a loaded meaning. They meant not only to pay tribute to, but also to accept overlordship of a *ras*, to fight in his wars, to recognize the right of appeal of the people to him and to seek his sanction to occupy provincial governorship. Unless a *ras* or *ras bitwädäd* succeeded in obtaining the submission of the other lords, his title would be empty and he could not have 88 *nägarits*. Moreover, some other lord would challenge him to give up his pretensions and

instead acknowledge him an overlord. The most common procedure to resolve the issue was the battlefield.

Thus to say that lords warred for "guardianship" or "to become *ras* or *ras bitwädäd*" meant that they fought for power, for authority over all the patrimonial provinces. This kind of fighting took on the character of rebellions especially after Gugsä had imposed his suzerainty. Thus, in the decades after 1825, frequent wars were fought mainly with lords who refused to recognise Wära Séh overlordship and who therefore desired to overthrow them. The latter went on frequent campaigns to the various provinces to impose their suzerainty or to retain their power.

Especially the death of the *ras* provided the occasion for rebellion. Thus, succession strife acquired a new character in this period. The death of Ali I in 1788 generated a series of wars. It took years and many bloody battles for the strife to be brought to an end. The death of Gugsä in 1825 was likewise a spark that set off a series of petty wars.

The courtiers of Gugsä quickly put his son, Yimam, on the *alga*. The available documentation does not indicate any serious crises over succession within the court. It was rather Gugsä's tributary lords who refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of Yimam. Thus a series of rebellions wracked the Masfenate for something like six years - until, that is to say, the battle of Däbrä Abay in 1831.

Perhaps, the first lord to rebel was Gošu Zäwdé of Gojam¹⁵¹. Yimam marched to Gojam. In the meantime, Haylä Maryam raised the standard of rebellion. Gäbrä Selasé who certainly collected traditions from the descendants of Haylä Maryam himself and of the Wära Séh rulers laconically stated that "ደጃዝማች ኃይለ ግርግሮ ... ራስ ጉግሃ ጥቶ ለላጁ አልገዛም [አለ]". Following the tradition of the era he put on the throne Aṣé Bā-edä Maryam and marched on Gondar¹⁵². Yimam apparently subdued Gošu and turned his attention to the lord of Semén¹⁵³. It seems that the former had mobilized a big force¹⁵⁴. The fighting took a number of days which made the campaign rather hard¹⁵⁵. In the end, Haylä Maryam was defeated, went back to his province where he died in the same year in 1826¹⁵⁶.

Däjazmač Maru, the governor of Dämbya, had so far been a loyal tributary lord¹⁵⁷. But he formed an alliance with Gošu and declared his rebellion in 1827¹⁵⁸. Yimam summoned his loyal tributary lords. Webé was one of those who responded to the call. Yimam offered Maru and Gošu battle at Kosso Bär in October, 1827¹⁵⁹. He defeated them. Maru lost his life but Gošu escaped and later submitted¹⁶⁰.

Yimam died shortly after in January 1828. His brother Maryé succeeded him. Again the transition seemed smooth. Again the bid for the *alga* came from outside. Gošu was again in the frontline of those who refused to acknowledge the

new suzerain¹⁶¹. But Maryé quickly defeated him. As I have tried to show above, Webé and Subagadis also refused to be the tributary lords of Maryé. Webé was the first to be brought to line. Thus he participated as a vassal in the battle of Däbrä Abay which ended in the death of Subagadis¹⁶².

Nevertheless, Maryé died on the morrow of victory. Dori succeeded him without much problem. But Dori ruled for only three months and fell ill grievously. This happened on his way back from Tegray to Däbrä Tabor in June, 1831. The chronicler gives us a short but valuable account of what he did as he realized that he was going to die:

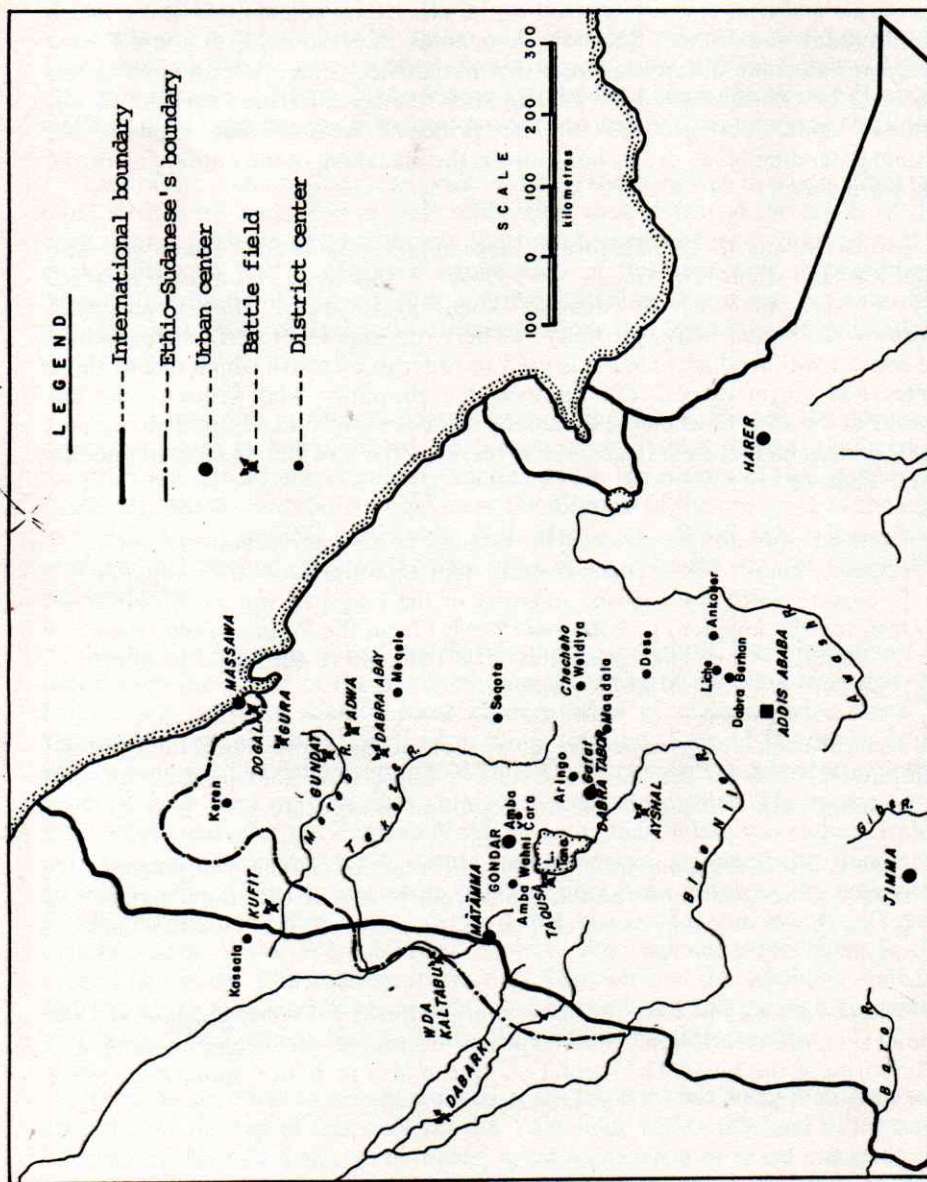
On his return to camp, he fell grievously ill. He put in prison Dajzmatch Kenfu and Amade, in order that they might not create disturbance and remained thus for three months; then he died and was buried in the tomb of his father. The month in which he died was Sane [Sic] 1831.

Ras Ali was elected. He let out Dajzmatch Kenfu and Amade from the prison where Ras Dori had thrown them and bestowed on Dajzmatch Kenfu the government of the country formerly ruled by Dajzmatch Maru. He then sent Amade back to his country to govern his own district.¹⁶³

This was perhaps a very wise measure because the degree of opposition was not as much as it was in the previous years. One can however glean much more from this evidence. It is a precious document because it offers us an excellent insight into the nature of the relationship between the Yäju rulers and the other lords. It definitely demonstrates that Dori (and for that matter his predecessors and successor) was indeed the master and the overlord who exercised considerable authority over his tributary lords.

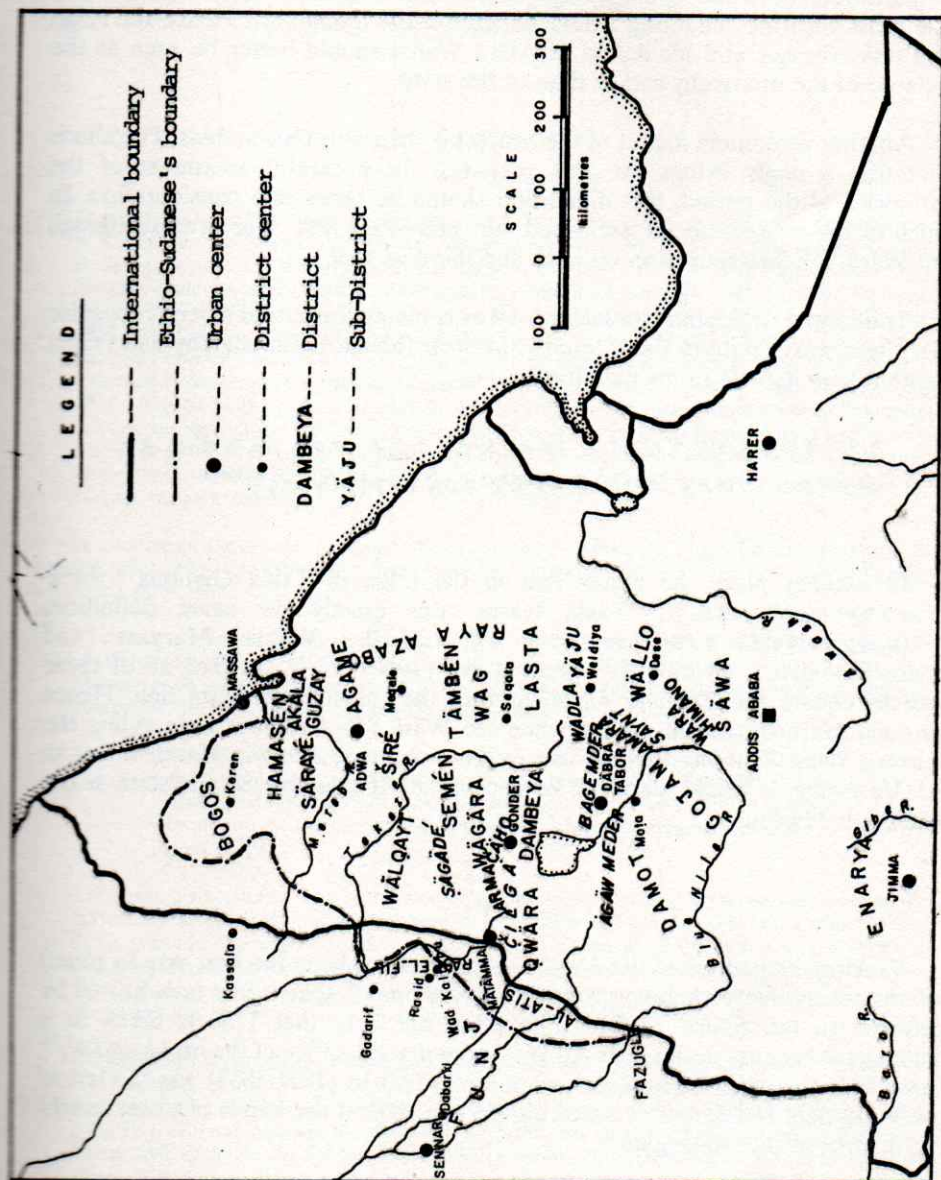
When it comes to Ali, the chronicler was rather wrong. It was not Ali but his regents who released Kenfu and Amädé from custody. A council of regents had been constituted when Ali sat on the *alga* because he was a minor. It was made up of Mänän, his mother and *Däjazmačs* Amädé and Bäšer of Wära Himäno and Wälo respectively¹⁶⁴. It was this council especially Mänän who dominated the political scene of the Masfenate for much of the 30s. Amädé and Bäšer were related to Ali through Mänän. They remained the most trusted tributary lords of the Masfenate in these years.

The struggle for power following the death of Ali I and Gugsä therefore demonstrate another new aspect of the political history of the period. In the period before, succession strife centred around factions in the royal court. Lords did not attempt to sit on the throne themselves; what rather they did was to select one of the royal princes and crown him. An opposing faction would do the same by taking another prince. This old tradition developed a new dimension in this period. Even if the institution of Amba Wähni was abandoned some time in the



The Ethio-Sudanese boundary is based on the sketch maps in S. Rubenson, *Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, pp. 216, 291

1. Map 1: Ethiopia in the 1840s



2. Map 2: Provinces, Ethiopia in the 1840s

Täklä Giyorgis, "the last king of kings to exercise any authority whatever of his own", was nicknamed *fešamé māngest* which is normally translated as "end of government/state"¹⁷³. The only scholar I am aware of who casts doubt on this translation is Ato Täklä Sadiq though he does not fully develop his arguments¹⁷⁴. The most accurate rendering would be "end of the monarchy". Hence the reign of Täklä Giyorgis and his defeat at Afärä Wanat should better be seen as the collapse of the monarchy rather than of the state.

Another prominent aspect of the sources is their anti-Oromo bias. The above quotation strongly brings out this prejudice. In a careful assessment of the chronicles of the period, this dimension should be taken into consideration. In much of the sources so far published, an anti-Wärä Séh bias prevails though pro-Wärä Séh passages pop up here and there as well.

Traditional Ethiopian scholars as well as contemporaries did indeed recognise that there was a state in the *Zamana Masafent* though the monarchy had fallen. Asmé is very explicit in his definition:

ዓፄ ተክለ ጊዮርጊስ[?] ... [ራስ አሊ] አረረ ዋናት ውትግራ ላይ መታቸው። ... ከዚያ ጀምሮ ኢትዮጵያ የጋላ መንግሥት ሆነች¹⁷⁵

In another place, he writes that in the reign of Täklä Giyorgis "ጋላች መንግሥትነቱን ወሰዱ"¹⁷⁶ Täklä Iyäsus uses exactly the same definition: **ዘመነ መሃናንት የጋላች መንግሥት**¹⁷⁷. Zänäb, Wäldä Maryam and Kassa-Tewodros - all talk of "የጋላች መንግሥት"¹⁷⁸. In fact, all of these sources equate the *Zamana Masafent* with the rule of the Wärä Séh. Hence *Zamana Masafent* meant an era when the Wärä Séh *Masafent* were ruling the country. What *Zamana Mangest* was to the monarchy, *Zamana Masafent* was to the *Masfenate*. It would therefore be appropriate to characterize the state as the Wärä Séh *Masfenate*.

- IV -

Tracing the genesis of the *Masfenate* would have been the best way to round off this essay. Nevertheless, given the limitations of space, this task has to be deferred to the future. Suffice it to point out here that 1786 is taken as a benchmark because in this year Ali Sr.¹⁷⁹ occupied the office of the *ras bitwädäd*.¹⁸⁰ From 1786 to 1853, his family stayed in power. Ali Jr. (1831-1853) was the last of the Wärä Séh. His defeat at Ayšal on 29 June 1853 at the hands of Kassa marks the demise of the *Masfenate*.

The Wārā Séh stayed in power for 67 years. They had kept together most of the provinces they had inherited which should be put to their credit. Whether or not the country experienced under their rule the utmost decline or stagnation in economic and social terms as is widely stated in the literature remains to be a subject worthy of an extended reinvestigation.

NOTES

1. Some of the finest historians are found in the field of 19th c. Ethiopian history. For example, S. Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London, 1978) is a fine and meticulous study of the external relations of the country in the 19th c. His *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa - Nairobi, 1966) is still an important reference work. M. Abir, *Ethiopia, the Era of Princes: the Challenge of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855* (London, 1968) is a required reading for the period. The third specialist D. Crummey has come up with a series of very stimulating articles since the publication of his book entitled, *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia, 1830-1868* (Oxford, 1972). A good number of his articles have pioneered hitherto unexplored areas in Ethiopian history, like agriculture, the family, women, *šefnāt* and several other facets of state and society. To list all of his numerous publications here would take too much space. Students of Ethiopian history have to hold their breath until the appearance of his study on land tenure which is his current research project.
2. In addition to those listed in note 1 above, see also S. Rubenson, "Ethiopia and the Horn" in J.E. Flint (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa: from c. 1790 to c. 1870*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1976), pp.51-98.
3. The scholar who has taken to its extreme the "disintegration" theory is J.S. Trimingham. He characterized the era as the period of "the triumph of regionalism" (p.104) or as "the disintegration of the empire" (p.105). The *Zamana Masafent* was "the period of regional sovereigns" (p.107) *Islam in Ethiopia* (London, 1965). He continues:

Ras Mikā'ēl became Champion of the national forces and the Church, and in the ensuing years of struggle the provinces of Begemder, Tigrāi, Lāsta, and Dāmot all participated with their armies as sovereign powers. From now on the history of Abyssinia is a history of separate kingdoms....
(*Ibid*, p.105).

Trimingham's summary is extremely important firstly because this is the popular view of the period. Secondly, Abir accepted his thesis in its entirety and developed it into a major theory in his book. In one way or another, even the finest historians of the 19th c. (e.g. Rubenson, Crummey, Caulk) have adopted this same theory as I will try to show below. The influence that Trimingham and following him Abir exercised on Ethiopian historiography is out of proportion to the amount of research they have done and to the quality of their work.

Crummey has captured the essence of this interpretation by using the expression "collapse of the Ethiopian State" for the period. See "Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia during the *Zamana Masafent*", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, VIII, 2(1975), p.270; and also see the definition on p.267. See also "Foreign Missions in Ethiopia", *The Bulletin of the Society For the African Church History*, II, 1 (December, 1965), p.15 where he writes, "Ethiopia, in the early 19th century, was going through a period of extreme regionalism". All his writings are organized around this theory.

The other prominent scholar defines it in much the same vein: the *Zamana Masafent* "was characterized by a complete breakdown of imperial authority and by increasing regionalism". Rubenson, "Ethiopia and the Horn", p.57. Abir, however, gives a definition with a slightly different nuance and emphasis:

With the decline of imperial authority, the regional governors, although officially still owing allegiance to the king of kings and through him to his guardian, strengthened their position within their provinces to the point where they could be considered semi-independent.... (Abir, p.29).

In short, there is a consensus among historians on this thesis. The popular and official view of the period is in complete agreement with the interpretations of Trimingham.

4. *Ibid.*, p.37. Trimingham (pp.107-8) places Gošu in the category of the four "great protagonists" of the period.

5. One of the central terms of Abir's book is "predominance." Chapters 2,5 and 6 deal with the "predominance" of the Yäju rulers and the struggle of the Christian Lords against it. Crummey follows in his footsteps:

"The Yeju rulers of Begemdr enjoyed a clear pre-eminence." *Priests and Politicians*, p.29. In another context he writes of "the dominance of the Yajju Galla" *Ibid.* p.92. Rubenson too squarely falls within the same school. See his *Survival* p.35.

6. "The aspiration of the most powerful governors was to become *ras* of the kingdom, or *ras bitwedded*.. and thereby guardian of the king of kings. The struggle for this supreme position, and the recurring attempts by feudal lords on all levels to increase their domains at the expense of their neighbours, caused a state of almost constant small-scale warfare." Rubenson *Survival*, p.34. Abir repeats the same thing in different words. Abir, pp.29-30. Crummey fully accepts this interpretation though he gives more emphasis to aggrandisement of territory:

The decades following the 1770s saw the emergence of regionally based lineages and nobles who competed with each other on the battlefield, seeking the enlargement of their tributary rights. None succeeded in establishing an enduring supremacy...Thus the nobility did not view the subjugation of the monarchy as an opportunity to transform class relations between itself and the peasantry. Rather, the various noble lineages, and individual nobles, saw this subjugation as an opportunity for aggrandizement *vis-à-vis* other lineages and individuals. The result was almost a century of bloody strife.

D. Crummey, "Society and State: 19th-Century Ethiopia", in D.Crummey and C.C. Stewart (eds.), *Modes of Production in Africa: The Precolonial Era* (Beverly Hills, 1981), p.236.

7. All the three specialists of the period talk of shifting coalitions and alliances. The wars and political events of the *Zamana Masafent* were throughout marked by "the shifting alignments of the great nobles." Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity..." , p.275. See also the accounts of the wars of 1826-1831 in Abir, pp.33-36.
8. Rubenson and Abir are emphatic about this role of the Church. In the *Zamana Masafent*, the "Church... was too busy with its own petty quarrels to provide the much-needed leadership and inspiration for its people." Abir, p.39. He further (p.43) states "...the Ethiopian Church, in the past a source of inspiration around which the Christian population rallied in times of crisis, was now incapable of putting up any serious opposition." Rubenson writes: "The situation [of the *Zamana Masafent*], was further aggravated by developments in the Ethiopian Church,

which had in the past, together with the monarchy, been the strongest unifying factor in the Ethiopian state and had traditionally acted as a mediator in political conflicts." "Ethiopia and the Horn", pp.57-8. See also *Survival*, p.34. Crummey also attributes considerable significance to the Church: "Indeed doctrinal disagreements almost certainly played a role in undermining royal authority." "Orthodoxy and Imperial Reconstruction in Ethiopia, 1854- 1878, *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.s. XXIX, Pt. 2 (October, 1978), p.431.

Dr. Sergew Hable Selassie, however, reverses the argument: "During this difficult time [Zamana Masafent], when the various provinces of the Empire were ruled by different local lords, the Orthodox Church had remained one of the few unifying forces in the country. Unfortunately, the Church herself was divided by a doctrinal controversy..." Sergew Hable Selassie, "The Period of Reorganization" in *Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life* (Addis Ababa, 1970), p. 31. This theory however shares with the prevalent theory outlined above an attribution of a central place to the Church. To this extent, it falls within the same category.

9. Trimingham, p.107. In fact, Trimingham further states that because of "its sacred character" the "Galla" rulers "however much power they wielded, did not aspire to the throne, though it was possible for a bandit chieftain like Rās (sic) Kāsa or the Shoan King Menelik to do so because they claimed Solomonic descent." *Ibid.* Rubenson says the same thing: "The awe in which the Solomonic dynasty had been held lingered on, and for several decades prevented attempts to usurp the throne itself..." *Survival*, p.34; see also *idem*, "Ethiopia and the Horn", p.58.

Crummey also belongs to the same school. "State and Society...", pp.237,244-5.

10. In *King of Kings*, Rubenson devotes a chapter to the discussion of the background of Kassa. But his attempt to place him in his historical context leaves much to be desired.
11. See, for example *ibid.* chaps., 2,3 and 4. Though Rubenson concedes that "Tewodros was of course largely the product of his time" (p.46), the general tenor of his book clearly suggests that he is also in the same school. The expression that Tewodros is "ahead of his time" is commonly used especially in Amharic. See also Department of History (AAU), "Introduction to the History of Ethiopia", (Mimographed teaching material, 1983), p.94.
12. This conclusion is drawn from Rubenson, *Survival*, where the author offers a general assessment of his sources.
13. See all his writings but especially *Ibid.*
14. For a profile of d'Abbadie see Georges Malécot, *Les Voyageurs Français et les Relations entre la France et l'Abyssinie de 1835 à 1870* (Paris, 1972), pp.19-24; W. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla country with an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848* (London, 1968), pp.VII-VIII.
15. Plowden, pp.358-9; see also p.38 for a similar analysis.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p.358
18. *Ibid.*, p.38.
19. Arnaud d'Abbadie, *Douze Ans de Sejour Dans la Haute Ethiopie (Abyssinie)* Vol. I, ed. and ann. by J.M. Allier (Vatican City, Rep. of 1868 ed., 1980), p.185. The translation would read as follows: "from Massawa upto Innarya and from Woheni upto Ankober".

20. *Ibid.*, pp.185-6.
 21. *Ibid.*, p.186.
 22. *Ibid.*, p.185.
 23. *Ibid.*, pp.185-6.
 24. See note 4 above. Moreover, see, Rubenson, *Survival*, pp.34-6.
 25. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, pp.187-9.
 26. Plowden, p.376.
 27. *Ibid.*, p.359.
 28. For detailed discussions of these relationships and institutions see M. Bloch, *Feudal Society* Trans. L.A. Manyon, 2 Vols. (Chicago, 1964); F.L. Ganshof, *Feudalism* (New York, 1961).
 29. The concept of Ethiopian Feudalism has been attacked vigorously by Gene Ellis in his "The Feudal Paradigm as a Hindrance to Understanding Ethiopia." *Journal of Modern African Studies* XIV, 2(1976), pp.275-95. Much earlier than Ellis, M. Perham had registered her opposition to the application of the concept to Ethiopia. M. Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London, 2nd ed. 1969), pp.76, 267ff. The latest scholar to question the applicability of this concept is Desalegn Rahmato, "Political Power and Social Formation in Ethiopia under the Old Regime: Notes on Marxist Theory" in Tadesse Beyene (ed), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 1, (Addis Ababa, 1988), pp.463-478.
- Dessalegn's analysis is rather different from the above two authors in that he argues that feudalism existed in Southern Ethiopia while it did not exist in the North. For a defence of the concept, see D. Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism", *Past and Present*, 89 (Nov., 1980), pp.115-138. The literature in this school is considerable. But in general it suffers from generality and superficiality.
30. I have already tried to outline some of my ideas in my "Working paper on Research Workshop, Theme for the Next Departmental Seminar and the General History of Ethiopia" (Prepared for the Fourth annual Seminar of the Department of History, Addis Ababa University to be held at Awasa, July 9-11, 1987), pp.20ff.
 31. Abir, p 33; d'Abbadie, Vol. I, p.150; Gäbrä Selassé, *Tarikä Zāmān Zā-Dagmawī Menelik Negusā-Nägāst Zā-Itiyopya* (Addis Ababa, 1959 E.C), p.120.
 32. H.Weld Blundell (ed. and trans.), *The Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, 1769-1830* (Cambridge, 1922), pp.484-5.
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. Zänäb, "Yä Tēwodros Tarik (Princeton, ed. and pub. by E. Littmann, 1902), p.2. "And Gugsä ruled Bägēmdēr, Gojam, Wällo and all [the other provinces], and [then] he died."
 35. The Wārä Sēh "united Yajju, Lasta, Agaw, Wadla Dalanta, Wallo, Begamdir, Simen, Gondar, Wagara, Dambiya, highland Agawland, Damot and Gojjam; they overthrew the kingdom of Gondar and ruled for sixty-eight years". *Alāqa Tayä Gäbrä Maryam, History of the People of Ethiopia*, trans. by Grover Hudson and Tekeste Negash (Uppsala, 1987), p.85.

36. "Ras Gugsa... governed Gojam, Bagemedir, Tegre and Wallo with absolute authority for 27 years, until his death." Bayru Tafla (trans & ed), *Ašmä Giyorgis and His Work: History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Sawa* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp.438, 439.
37. Bayru, pp.56-7.
38. *Ibid.*, pp.67, 434, 435 No. 630.
39. Bayru in a profile of Ašmé published in 1967 wrote that Ašmé was born in 1821 and died in 1914. "Three Portraits: Ato Ašma Giyorgis, Ras Gobana Dači, and Šahafe Tezaz Gabra Selasse" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, V, 2 (1967), pp.139-44. But in his later work (Bayru, *Ašma Giyorgis*, p.49 and n.3) states that the previous year of birth (i.e. 1821) was wrong and then he corrects it to 1850 citing de Coppet's note on the manuscript of his *History* that Ašmé died at the age of 65. I prefer however the dating of Ešātu Täfära on the basis of family tradition and the note left behind by Ašmé's daughter, Wäyzäro Bälätešačaw that he died at 82 in 1915. Ato Ešātu is engaged in research on an analysis of the poetry of Ašmé and his other works. Personal communication, August, 1989.
40. N. Pearce, *The Life and Times of Nathaniel Pearce Written by Himself during a Residence in Abyssinia from the Years 1810 to 1819; Together with Mr. Coffin's Account of his Visit to Gondar*. Vol. II ed. by J.J.Hall (London, 1831), pp.198-261. See also Täklä Šadiq Mäkuriya who writes
 የትግራውም ራስ ወልደሥላሴ ለገንደሩ እንደራሴ ለራስ ጉግሃ አልገዘም
 ለለው ለብቻቸው የሚከራከሩበት ጊዜ ነበር።
YäEtyopya Tarik: Ka Ašē Lebna Dengel eskä Ašē Tēwodros (Addis Ababa: 4th Rep.by the Ministry of Education, 1961 E.C.), p.323. "It was a period when Ras Wäldä Selasé of Tegräy refused to be ruled by Ras Gugsa and struggled alone".
41. S. Rubenson (ed.). *Acta Aethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties, 1800-1854* (Lund, 1987), p.17 (note)
42. *Ibid.*
43. See text and note in *Ibid.*, p.8.
44. *Ibid.*, p.17.
45. Pearce's accounts give much information on some of the years of this period. See note 40 above and see also Abir, p.32.
46. I have used the orthography of Subagadis rather than Sebagadis following his preferences as it has come to light in Rubenson, *Acta*, pp.24 ff.
47. C.W. B. Huntingford (trans. and ed.), *The Land Charters of Northern Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1965), pp.68-69 for land charters no. 73 (73), 74(74), 75 (75), 76(76) and pp.71-72 for land charters 81 (81) and 82 (82).
48. *Ibid.*, p.68 charter no. 73 (73).
49. Crummeys analysis is the exact opposite of the one offered here:

[The nobility] did not abolish the monarchy, and throughout the period the monarchy remained available to sanction appointments to the highest ranks of the nobility or to sanction grants of land to major churches. "State and Society", p.237.

In a note to this statment, he cites "Gwoshu's investiture as *ras* in 1848" and "charters No. 66-100 in Huntingford (1965), some of which have royal sanction. The Huntingford charters

are particularly significant in this regard since they emanate from Aksum in Tegra while the emperors were generally resident in Gondar, a considerable distance away, under the control of rivals of the rulers of Tigre" (pp.244-5).

This analysis is based on the premise that the lords of Tegra and of Amhara were on an equal footing.

50. Charters no. 74 (74), no. 75(75) in Huntingford, p.69.
51. Charter no. 76(76) in *Ibid.*
52. Charter no. 81(81) in *Ibid.*, p.71.
53. Charter no. 82(82) in *Ibid.*, p.72.
54. Bayru, *Asma Giyorgis*, p.438.
55. Abir, p.35.
56. See Georges Malécot, *Les Voyageurs Français* for profiles of the French travellers.
57. Asmé's history comes all the way to the last years of Menelik but internal evidence clearly shows that some of the chapters were drafted some time in the last quarter of the 19thc. See Bayru, pp.674, 702,718.
58. R. Perini, *Di qua dal Mareb (Mareb-Mellasc)* (Florence, 1905), p.213; Bayru, pp.636, 438; "Däjazmač Säbagadis got very strong and looked down upon the Galoč [the Wära Séh] and did not pay tribute to them". Täklä Iyäsus, "Yä Gojam Tarik" (IES MS no. 254) f.56b; "At that time Säbagadis rebelled and... they fought. Ras Maryé was the victor." Täklä Sadiq follows this interpretation

... በራስ ግርድ ጊዜ የአጋጣሚ ደጀች በባጋደስ የገደመ ደጀች ገዢ

አገገዛዎ ብለው እንቢ አሉ

Translation: During [the reign of] Ras Maryé, Däjač Säbagadis of Agamé and Däjač Gošu of Gojam declared that 'we would not pay tribute to, and be ruled by [Ras Maryé]' (pp.314-315) [A few pages below, he adds] ደጀች በባጋደስም ... በመፈረሻ ከራስ ግርድ ተጣሉ።

በበጊዎድር ዋናው የመገገሥት እንደራሴ ራስ ግርድ ስለሆኑ እንደደንቡ

ገብርኤል ብለው ለደጀች በባጋደስ ባኩ። ደጀች በባጋደስም አልገብርኦ

ብለው በገሀድ እንቢታቸውን አስታወቁ። Täklä Sadiq, pp. 317-8.

Däjač Säbagadis ... at last quarreled with Ras Maryé. Since Ras Maryé was the *endärrassé* of the king in Bägemder, he sent a message to Däjač Säbagadis to pay [him] tributes. Däjač Säbagadis declared his rebellion by replying "I won't pay tribute".

This interpretation and many others (see notes 80, 94, 101, 118, 152, 161 below for further references and quotations) undoubtedly show that Täklä Sadiq has a much superior insight than the modern-trained, established historians of the period. Unfortunately, this insight is vitiated by his failure to cite his sources.

59. Abir, p.35.
60. Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity...", p.275.
61. Abir, p. 35.
62. *Ibid.*, p.36.

ደጃች ውቤ በአባቱ አልጋ ተቀመጠ። እርሱም ግን ለግን ይገዛ ብሎ
ተነሣ፤ ከራስ ይግም ጋራ ወገራ ላይ ተዋጉ። ደጃች ውቤ ድል ሆነ።
ከጥቂት ቀን በኋላ ይግም ታም ሞተ።

Bayru, p.636. Täklä Şadiq's interpretation is fully in line with this analysis:

"[ደጃች ውቤ] ለራስ ይግም አልገዛም ብለው ለሞርነት ተሰለፉ።" (p.313).

Translation: "...Däjač Webé fought with Ras Yimam declaring that he would not recognise his suzerainty. They fought at Wägära. After a few days Ras Yimam died." Täklä İyäsus, f.55b. "Däjač Webé... sat on his father's *alga*. And he rebelled declaring that he would not recognise [Yimam's] suzerainty. They fought with Ras Yimam at Wägära. After a few days, Yimam died of sickness". Bayru, p.636, "Däjač Webé declared that he would not be ruled by Ras Yimam and prepared himself for battle." Täklä Şadiq, p.313.

81. Täklä İyäsus, f. 55b; see also Bayru, p.636.

82. Rubenson, *Survival*, p.66.

83. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, p.187. Cf. Rubenson (*Survival* pp.66-7) who states that the alliance of Subagadis and Webé against Maryé was first broken by Subagadis himself who "started to negotiate an agreement with Mariye and remained rather inactive in Tigre, [while] his ally Webe was defeated in a battle in June 1830." Abir's accounts (pp.35-36) are a little different:

... [Subagadis] kept up continuous communications with the most important Christian lords of Ethiopia, until in 1830 he succeeded in forming a loose coalition with the Christian rulers of Gojjam, Lasta, and Semien against Ras Marye. However, Marye, who was forewarned of the plot, dealt with his opponents singly. After defeating *Dejazmatch* Goshu in Gojjam, he marched with the bulk of his army to Lasta, and then quickly turned to Semien and attacked Wube. Seb'agadis, who was watching his border with Lasta, did not come to the aid of his ally and Wube preferred to submit to the Ras rather than face him alone. After his success in isolating Seb'agadis, Marye decided to put an end to the Tigrean threat. At the head of Galla contingents from Wollo, Yeju, Begamder and Amhara, and supported by the armies of Wube and Goshu, he advanced beyond the Takaze into Tigre. Seb'agadis had meanwhile mobilized his forces and in the beginning of 1831 the two armies met at Mai Islami near Debra Abbai.

Crummey follows this interpretation. See his "Society and Ethnicity", p.275.

84. See p. 32 above.

85. Täklä İyäsus, f. 56b; Bayru, p.636. "Däjač Webé rebelled in the hope of obtaining the *alga*."

86. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, p.187. Webé was summoned "by the Ras Mariyé to come to Däbrä Tabor to pay his homage and loyalty, he refused."

87. Rubenson, *Survival*, p.67.

88. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, pp.187-9.

89. Bayru, p.636. "They fought at Enčät Kab with Ras Mariyé. *Däjazmač* Webé was defeated. After this, Webé lost hope and became a vassal." The Amharic word for vassal ስጦት actually denotes "retainer" rather than "vassal".

Scholars have given an entirely different interpretation to the outcome of this battle and the subsequent developments. Crummey, for example, categorically states that at this time "Ras Marye had secured an alliance with Webe and was preparing a massive northern campaign." *Priests and Politicians*, p.37. A little below he writes of "the Marye-Webe alliance" (p.38). These conclusions formulated in the mid-1960s were not changed by time. "Blunt considerations of power openly determined the actions of Webe..." in his decision to "switch allegiance" from Subagadis to Maryé. "Society and Ethnicity", p.276. What choice would Webe have after his defeat in June, 1830 except to become a vassal if he wanted to retain his position as governor of Semén?

90. Abir, pp.35-6.

91. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, pp.187-9.

92. Weld Blundell, pp.485-6.

93. Täklä Haymanot, a contemporary writer, uses the word "appointed", see C. Conti Rossini, "Viscende dell'Etiopia e delle missioni cattoliche ai tempi di ras Ali, deggiac Ubie e re Teodros secondo un documento abissinio", *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei* 5,XXV (1916), p.447. D'Abbadie (Vol. II, p.41) and Plowden (p.385) were also informed by contemporaries that Webé was appointed by Dori. But in volume I, d'Abbadie states that it was Maryé's "grands feudataires" who "donnerent à Oubié l'investiture d'une portion du Tegraie". (p.188) Combes and Tamisier who came into the country only two years after this battle write that "... Oubié avait reçu le commandement du Tigre..." E. Combes et M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie, dans le Pays des Galla, de Choa et d'Ifat*, Vol. III, (Paris, 1843), pp.156-7.

94. Täklä Şadiq (p.318) has recorded a very tintillating tradition:

ራስ ግርዮ እንደሆኑ አያያዘኝን አንድ ላይ ሆነን ደጀች ለባጋደስን
ድል ብናደርግ መላውን የትግራን ገዛት እስካሁን ብለው ለደጀች ውብ
ቃል ገቡላቸው።

...And Ras Maryé promised to *Däjač* Webé that he would give him the entire province of Tegraï if they could be together as [happened] upto now and defeated *Däjač* Sebagadis," Takla Şadiq (p.320) further goes on:

የባጋደስን እንደራሴነት ለራሳቸው አስቀርተው የትግራን ገዛት
እነደወንድማቸው እንደ ራስ ግርዮ ቃል ለደጀች ውብ ለተቀላቸው።

[Ras Dori] retained the guardianship [*enderasénât*] of Bägémdr to himself and handed over the Tigré province to *Däjač* Webé in keeping with the promise of his brother Ras Maryé." Even if Täklä Şadiq does not cite his sources, his account certainly falls within the ambience and prevalent political manoeuvring of the period which gives it a great deal of credence.

95. The appointment of Mikael over Semén in October, 1757, (I. Guidi, *Annales Regum Iyasu II et Iyo'as* (Rome, 19123, p.194) must have been a turning point in his career because at one stroke he added the big army of Semén, Wägära, Wälqayt to the Tegrayan army. After this addition, he was bound to play an extremely crucial role in national politics. His appointment as a *ras binwädäd* in early 1768 should not come as a surprise. It was something that would most likely follow sooner or later.

96. Combes et Tamisier, pp.156-7.

97. *Ibid.* Combes and Tamisier further inform us that Faris Aligaz again mobilized an army by early 1832 and defeated the armies of *Däjazmač* Amädé and Bäšir of Wära Himäno and Wälo respectively. They had been sent by their overlord. But later Faris Aligaz was beaten. Again like Webé and many others in that era, he was reinstated in his office. *Ibid.*

98. See Abir, pp.104-5, 108-9 for the details.

99. *Ibid.*

100. D'Abbadie, Vol.I, p.188.

101. Abir, p.108; d'Abbadie, Vol I, p.189; see Tāklā Sadiq (pp.342-3)

ደጃቸ ውቢም ለራሱ ለሊ እንደታዘኝ እየገቡ እንደዘመድሁ ለጃቸውን
ወይዘሮ ሂሩትን ደረው የወደጅነትና የመተግመን መልክ እያሳዩ ተዩ...
በመጨረሻ ኃይለቸውን ሲተግመኑ ጦርነቱን ለመሃመር ምክንያት
በመረሰግ የተለመደውን ግብር ከላከሉ።

... [And *Dājaļ* Webé] paid his tributes to *Ras* Ali as a vassal and gave his daughter Hirut to him as a friend thus creating an atmosphere of friendship and confidence. He continued thus... Finally, when he felt confident of his strength he refused to pay tribute in order to have a pretext to start war." This interpretation falls fully in line with that of d'Abbadie who was an eye-witness informant. Hence, it is much better and more convincing than those of Abir, Rubenson and Crummev.

102. Abir, p.108.

103. *Ibid.*, pp.108-110.

104. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, pp.188-9. Translation: He [Webé] declared, it is true, his obedience to *Ras* Ali, sending him gifts, but found pretexts not to pay to *Däbrä Tabor* the annual visit which is a requirement for all vassals; he applied himself to capture by his attentions and liberal [gifts] *Wäizero Mänän* and the members of the council of the regency; he maintained an understanding with *Ali Fariz*, *Dājaļ* Kenfu and other feudal lords of his suzerain and he agitated them to rebel against the house of *Gugsa* which would, he says, end up reducing Ethiopia to Islam.

In the meantime the rumour that the *Ras* was going to take his power into his hands was spreading. I would presage that his first act would be to summon *Dājaļ* Oubié to come to *Däbrä Tabor*; in the event of a refusal he would march against him. They also talk of the defection of *Dājaļ* Guoscho, whose son *Birru*, *Fitawrari* or general of the avant guard of the *Ras* [Ali] had already been in the eyes of his suzerain. This state of affairs would create a general anxiety, would suspend communications between provinces, and would hinder caravans from undertaking long expeditions.

105. He declared he would crown someone to be king of kings. Plowden, p.387.

106. Tāklā Iyāsus, ff. 63b-64a; T. Lefebvre, Vol.I. pp.292-3; Gäbrä Selassé, (Amharic), p.121.

107. D'Abbadie, Vol. II, p.67.

108. *Ibid.* "To get *Birru* Aligaz put into captivity and to get reinstated in the investiture of *Dambiya*".

109. The whole discussion is based on d'Abbadie's accounts. See *Ibid.* pp.67-70. See also "Viscende...", p.464.

110. D'Abbadie, Vol. II, p.68; Th. Lefebvre, Vol. I, p.362; "Viscende...", p.464; Plowden, p.388.

111. Abir, p.112.

112. D'Abbadie, Vol.II, p.69.

113. *Ibid.*; Abir, p.112.

114. *Ibid.*, p.127.

115. *Ibid.*, p.128.

116. *Ibid.*

117. Plowden, p.359.

118. See also Tāklä Šadiq (p.331): "ደጃች ውብ ሲመቻቸው እየተገኙ ሳይመቻቸው ለራስ ለሊ እየገበጩ የተቀመጡ ናቸው።" "Dājač Webé ... was a lord who rebelled whenever circumstances were suitable and who paid tribute whenever they were not".

119. Zānāb, pp.14-15; Wāldä Maryam, p.3; Tāklä Iyāsus, f. 60a. Zānāb, Wāldä Maryam and Tāklä Iyāsus clearly talk in terms of Ali ordering the vassals to go and fight.

120. This analysis leaves out the Wālo and Wārä Himāno lords who had been among the most loyal vassals. In fact they constituted a part of the central institutions of the Masfenate. D'Abbadie writes that Faris Aligaz was "quatre fois vaincu par l'armée d'Ali en bataille rangée, il était tombé deux fois aux mains des vainqueurs; mais il avait été réintégré..." Vol. I, p.186; Vol. II, p.112. Gošu's death is described by Zānāb as follows:

በዘመነ ግብርኑ በወርህ ህደር [1852] ደጃች ጉሼን ለራስ ለሊ ሹመው ሰደዱባቸው። በደጃች ከሣ ሹመት ሁሉ ሳይ።

[In the battle of Gur Amba] "ደጃች ጉሼ በነፍጥ ጥቱ" "In the year of Mathew in the month of Hedar [1852]... Ras Ali appointed Dājač Gošu over all the districts of Dājač Kassa and sent him [to fight the latter. In the ensuing battle] Dājač Gošu was killed by a musket." Zānāb, p.14. See also Wāldä Maryam, p.2.

121. In the 1840s, "ደጃች ጉሼ ገን ለራስ ለሊ ተመኝ" "But Dājač Gošu became good (loyal) to Ras Ali." Tāklä Iyāsus, f.59a. For Beru Gošu see Plowden, pp.38, 43-47.

122. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.33. In a letter dated 20 June 1852, Plowden observed that "... in every way the final right of appeal to the supreme ruler exists, but the Ras, not being strong enough to enforce this right at present in the case of Oobeay, the decisions of that Chief are considered final" J.C. Hotten, *Abyssinia and its People* (London, 1868), p.121. Only the lord of Quwara and the Wagsum seem to have enjoyed this privilege.

123. For the Agreement of 1878, see Gäbrä Selasé, *Chronique du regne de Menelik II, Roi des rois d'Ethiopie* trans. Tesfa Sellasie, annotated by Maurice de Coppet, Vol. I (Paris, 1930) pp.143 and notes 7 and 8, 145 n.3.

124. This is clearly spelt out in the agreement. See *Ibid.*, particularly p.143 and note 7 in which this is stated.

125. But it should be pointed out that Yohannes ordered Menelik to go on an expedition with Tāklä Haymanot against the Mahdists. Otherwise, Menelik met Yohannes in Wālo or Yāju or Dābrä Tabor. See, for instance, Bayru Tafla, pp.698-9. Heruy Wāldä Selasé reproduces in his manuscript a letter written by Yohannes to Menelik in December, 1880 inviting him to come to Dābrä Tabor to attend Adal's coronation as a *negus*. If Menelik could not make it,

Yohannes wrote, he himself would go to Wällo where they could meet. *Yä-Etyopya Tarik*, p.53 (This is a copy of the printer's proof bound together and kept at the IES. It is not complete, though. Additional manuscripts are bound together with the proof.)

126. Fantahun, pp.11-20; Täklä İyäsus, ff. 58b-59a *et passim*.
127. For example, Ferret and Galinier (t.2, p.417) state that "the Abyssinians were divided into two camps; some of them taking the side of the king of Tigre (Webe); and the others that of the chief of Gondar." And (*Ibid* p.327) they talk of the country being divided into independent kingdoms. The years 1839-1842 do give this kind of impression.
128. D'Abbadie, Vol. I, pp.145, 185; Vol. II, p.110-112.
129. The army under Maryé at the battle of Däbrä Abay was interpreted in these terms by Rubenson, Abir and Crummey. See notes 83, 89 for the quotations and page references.
130. For instance, Plowden who very often talks of Ali as the ruler of the country at times makes the remark that "in this unruly realm, to be nominally chief is one thing, and actually govern is another..." Thus he implies that Ali's supremacy was nominal rather than actual (see p.358). But in another context he states that the Ras also exercised even the right of final judgement over life and death, Hotten, p.131. Ar. d'Abbadie is also at times confusing.
131. Weld Blundell, p.487. See also below, pp. 47-48.
132. The whole of this account is drawn from d'Abbadie, Vol. II, pp.69-70. For the battle of Däbrä Tabor and for the events before and after it, perhaps the most detailed and best account is that of d'Abbadie. He himself was in Gondar in those days and before and after the battle he moved to Gojjam and Däbrä Tabor where he collected information from eye-witnesses.
133. *Ibid*. p.60.
134. Translation: When Ras Ali heard [the news of] the battle between *Däjač* Beru and *Däjač* Gošu he quickly marched to Gojam from Däbrä Tabor. He camped at Adét and summoned them to submit. *Däjač* Beru refused to submit and went up to Soma Amba. But *Däjač* Gošu submitted because he said, "I would not break my allegiance." And Ras Ali said [to Gošu] "Previously, you fought with my appointees, Seyoum, Beqahāñ and the rest and killed them. And now why do you fight between yourselves?" He said: "Unless father and son go along together, you would not be good vassals to me", and [then] he chained *Däjač* Gošu. At that moment, Täsäma Gošu begged Ras Ali, "Let me be put in chains in the place of my father". Ras Ali thanked Täsäma Gošu, chained him in exchange and released *Däjač* Gošu ... But *Däjač* Gošu became good (loyal) to Ras Ali and Ras Ali released his son and created him *Däjazmač* over Agäw and Buré." This tradition is recorded in Täklä İyäsus, ff. 58a-9b. Täklä Şadiq (pp.334-5) also gives the same tradition without citing his source. It is quite possible that Täklä Şadiq could have seen Täklä İyäsus. Kăbädä Täsäma has also collected this tradition as part of his project of collecting folk poetry from Gojam. See p.11 of the manuscript which is in the possession of Dr. Kenäfä Regeb Zäläqa who kindly showed me. There is no way to know whether or not Kăbädä had seen the Täklä İyäsus chronicle.
135. D'Abbadie (Vol. I, p.188) writes of "la visite annuelle de regueur pour tout vassal." See also, Plowden, pp.420-421 where he describes the lords he met in Däbrä Tabor. Some vassals seem to have paid homage even to Mänän in Gondar. D'Abbadie, Vol. II, p.61.
136. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p.189.
137. *Ibid*, pp.196-7.
138. *Ibid*, p.203. "to place himself at the disposal of his suzerain".

139. Plowden, p.205.

140. *Ibid.*

141. D'Abbadie, Vol.I, p.395.

142. Plowden, p.421.

143. To give *däbtärnät* to a *mäkonnen* meant that the recipient would be given land that would have been given to the *däbtära*. The lord would employ a priest to work in his name in the church as a substitute.

144. D'Abbadie, Vol. II, p.67. "Here is the seat of our suzerain. Until we know his fate, who among us refuses to safeguard this emblem of his authority in order to let him sit on it if God returns him or to let his young son accede to it or the one whom he agreed to take from among his heirs."

145. See *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp.331, 334; Hotten, pp.145-8. "Each chief holding the rank of Dejazmach — appointed by the Ras, or as often only obtaining his consent after a successful contest with his own rivals, is entire master of his province." *Ibid.*, pp.166-7.

146. "... and that month Dejazmach Zewde sent [to Gondar] presents of horses, and a herald announced his appointment as governor of Gojjam." Weld Blundell, p.466. Zäwdé had earlier been forced to recognize the overlordship of Ali. Note that the presents preceded the announcement of the appointment. Gošu journeyed to Gondar in 1948 to be created *ras*. This falls within this category.

147. "The highest rank in this nobility is that of Dejazmach" Hotten, pp.147-8.

148. The case of Wäsän Sägäd, the Šāwan lord, who simply assumed the title is the exception that proves the rule. He was an independent lord.

149. See note 6 above for quotations from Abir and Rubenson. For the *nägarit*, see Plowden, p.46.

150. See, for instance, Täklä Iyäsus, ff.52a, *et passim*; See also Täklä Sadiq, pp.313-343.

151. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, pp.19-20 and Abir, pp.33-4 almost repeat each other in their account of the years between 1825-1831. Both of them do not mention Gošu's rebellion as taking place before that of Haylä Maryam. Rather they talk of an alliance between Maru and Gošu in 1827 which led to the battle of Koso Bär in October, 1827. However, Gošu seems to have been the first to rebel following the death of Gugsä, according to the chronicle:

[Following the death of Gugsä] Dejazmatch Khayle Maryam came to make war. He reached Mount Mantä to put Atse Bä'eda Maryam on the throne, and he stayed at Mount Mantä fifteen days, for Ras Yimam was not in Begameder but had gone to Gojam to do battle against Dadjazmach Goshu. Weld Bundell, p.485.

Either Gošu had rebelled again or this campaign that the chronicler mentions was inconclusive for Gošu to participate at Koso Bär.

152. Gübrä Selasé (Amharic), p.117. "And *Däjazmač* Haylä Maryam [declared] that he would not be ruled by the son of *Ras* Gugsä after his death". Of the historians who have written on these years, only Täklä Šadiq seems to have followed this interpretation:

ጰጰቶ ኃይለማርያም አላገዝጦ ብለው አወሷቸው። እንደያውም ምሥፍና
የእኔ ነው ብለው ተነሡ።

Däjaʿ Haylä Maryam disturbed him by refusing to be ruled [by him]. In fact, he rebelled declaring that the Masfenate was his [by birth right]" (p.313).

153. Weld Blundell, pp.485-6.

154. *Ibid.* Gäbrä Selasé, who must have collected the tradition from descendants of the Yaju rulers writes that

ከጥጂም ከበጊም ድር ከደንቢያ ከጫቸህ በላይ ያለው ሆሉ እሱን
[ኃይለማርያምን] ለመውጋት ዘመተ።

"From Gojjam, Dämbiya, from the north of Čäčäho - all marched to fight him [Haylä Maryam]." (Amharic), p.117.

155. Weld Blundell, pp.485-6; Täklä Iyäsus, f. 55b; Bayru, p.636.

156. The chronicler suggests that he died from poison. Weld Blundell, pp.485-6.

157. That Maru had followed Yimam we are informed by the chronicler. *Ibid.*

158. Zänäb (p.5) uses a very good verb for Maru's actions: ሸረተ (rebelled). Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.22 and Abir, pp.33-4 talk in terms of one independent lord going to war against another.

159. Cf. Rubenson's account of the events of the years 1825- 1827:

Gugsa's death became the signal for renewed power struggles. First Hayle Maryam allied himself with Maru against Goshu. Then Maru joined Gugsa's son and successor Ras Yimam against Hayla Maryam, who was defeated in a battle outside Gondar in 1826 and died soon after. Hayle Maryam's son Wibe was captured but released on Maru's request and took over as *Dejazmach* of Semen. Some of his father's territory was, however, taken by Maru. Finally Yimam joined hands with Wibe, mobilized a number of his other vassals and marched against Maru and Goshu. In October 1827 the armies met at Koso Ber in Amedamit in Gojam. Maru and Goshu were defeated. *King of Kings*, pp.19-20. Abir (pp.33-4), repeats the same thing even sometimes using the same clauses.

160. *Ibid.* Cf. Rubenson and Abir as cited in note 83 above. They present Webé as an ally rather than as vassal.

161. Täklä Šadiq's account (p.315) goes as follows:

እንግዲህ ደጃቸ ጥሹ ጥጂምን በግንዛቤ በጊዜ በበጊም ድር ራስ ግርዶ
የዋናውን መንግሥት እንደራሴነቱን በለያዙ እንደገብሩላቸው ለደጃቸ
ጥሹ ላኩላቸው፤ ደጃቸ ጥሹም እንደተለመደው አልገብርም ብለው ሳኩ።
... ራስ ግርዶም የጦር ሠራዊታቸውን ይዘው ወደ ጥጂም ለግንባር መጡ።

"While *Däjaʿ Gošu* was ruling Gojam, *Ras Maryé* occupied the *enderassénät* of the government in Bägémdr. [*Ras Maryé*] summoned *Däjaʿ Gošu* to acknowledge him as his suzerain [lit.: to pay tributes]. As usual, *Däjaʿ Gošu* refused to recognize his suzerainty [lit.: to pay tribute]...

- At the head of his army, *Ras Maryé* marched to Gojam to obtain his submission [lit.: to make him pay tribute]."
162. See above pp. 36.
 163. Weld Blundell, p.487.
 164. Abir, pp.37-8.
 165. Thus succession to supreme power became open to all the lords at least in principle. This new tradition continued even after the restoration of the monarchy. Following the death of Tēwodros in 1868, the same phenomenon made its appearance except that this time the contenders had their eyes on the throne. When Yohannes died, as well, Menelik could sit on the throne without creating any special sensation. But Menelik seemed to have succeeded in establishing legitimacy because succession to him was limited to members of the Sahlä Selasé family. This legitimacy was attained by fully subduing and integrating the northern ruling houses who claimed as much legitimacy.
 166. Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (London, 1972), p.96; Trimmingham, p.105.
 167. *Ibid.*
 168. Aläqa Tayä, p.112; Täklä Sadiq, pp.313, 314 *et passim*.
 169. Kidanä Wäld Keflé, *Mäsehafä Säwasew WäGes Wämäzgäbä Qalat Hadis* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C), p.625a; Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Geez (Classical Ethiopic): Geez-English, English-Geez* (Wiesbaden, 1987), p.393.
 170. Weld Blundell, p.470.
 171. *Ibid.*, pp.471-2.
 172. *Ibid.*, p.477. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp.33-34; for quotation from W. Blundell, pp.469-70 with an identical meaning.
 173. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.18.
 174. Täklä Şadiq, p.288. One of the principal shortcomings of this historian as regards the Zamana Masafent is his inconsistency. See pp.289-290. Otherwise, his insight and prespective are in most cases thought provoking.
 175. Bayru, p.434; See also. p.624. "Ras Ali defeated Aşé Täklä Giyorgis... at Wätmira in Afärāwanat... From then on until the present Ethiopia became the kingdom of the Galla."
 176. *Ibid.* "The Galloč took the state".
 177. Täklä Iyäsus, f. 47a. "Zamana Masafent [is] the state/government of the Galla".
 178. See, for example: Zänäb, p.15; Wäldä Maryam, p.4; L.Fusella, *La Cronaca dell'Emperatore Teodros II di Etiopia in un manoscritto amarico* (1st serial) (Roma, 1958), p.73; Letter of Tewodros to Queen Victoria, dated 29 October, 1862 and again another letter same to same dated 29 January, 1866 facsimile repro. and trans. in Girma-Selassie Asfaw and David Appleyard in Collaboration with E.Ullendorff, *The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and her Special Envoy* (Oxford: 1979), pp.3a-3d, 5a-5d; "Kebrä Nāgäst Wätarikā Nāgäst" (IES MS No. 681, most probably written in the reign of Zāwditu, 1916-1930); Gäbrä Selassé (Amharic), p.121.

179. Ali I was called by Ethiopians Ali *talaqu* while Ali II was nicknamed *tenešu* which was widely mistranslated in the literature as Ali the Great and the Little respectively. Any Amharic speaking person knows very well that this kind of appellation is widely used in Amharic speaking families in the sense of senior and junior. In this case as well they should be rendered into English as Ali Sr. and Ali Jr. The same appellations were used for Iyasus I and II and for Gugsä (1803-1825) and for Ras Gugsä Wälé. In all these cases, the denotation was senior and junior respectively.
180. Traditional historiography places Ali's seizure of power in early 1784 following the victory over Täklä Giyorgis at Afärä Wanat by a coalition of lords in which Ali was a prominent member. See Zänäb, pp.2-4; Bayru, pp.434, 624. Afärä Wanat was significant in the career of Ali because he was able to move up to the position of *Dajazmach* of Bägémdr in the subsequent *šum šer*. Weld Blundell, p.342; D. Crummey, "Čäčäho and the Politics of the Northern Wällo-Bägémdr Border", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XIII, 1 (January, 1975), p.7. But he did not seize supreme power. In the list of new appointees given by the chronicler, he was the third coming after "Kanazmatch Tsadalu [who was appointed Bitwaddad] and Ras Khaylu [who was appointed] Dajazmatch of Gojam among the Agaw..." Weld Blundell, p.342. Ali used the subsequent two years to consolidate his position and groom himself for supreme power. It was in 1786 that King Täklä Giyorgis "promoted Ras Ali to be Bitwaddad with the title of Dajazmatch of Begameder", *Ibid.*, p.365; Crummey, "Čäčäho...", p.7. Therefore, it is proper to take the year 1786 as the starting year of the Wära Séh Masfenate notwithstanding the views of traditional historians.

የቴዎድሮስ ዓላማዎች ከየት እንደመነጩ

መርዕድ ወልደ አረጋይ

11 የካቲት 1855 በደረሰጌ ግርድም ቴዎድሮስ ተብለው ዘውድ የሜኑት ሰው እናትና አባታቸው ያወጡላቸው ስም ካሳ ነበር። ከ1820 በፊት በቋራ አውራጃ ተወለደ። (1) ካሳ ለእናታቸው ለወይዘሮ አትጠገብ እንድልጃቸው ሲሆኑ በአባታቸው በደጃች ኃይሉ ወልደጊዮርጊስ ግን ወንድሞችና ምናልባትም እህቶች ነበሩዋቸው። ደጃች ኃይሉ ከቋራ በላባቶች እንደ በመሆናቸው በዘመኑ የደምቢያ አምባገነን መስፍን የነበሩት የደጃች ግሩ ልጅ ወይዘሮ ወለተ ተክሌን አግብተው ከንፋንና ገብሩን ወልደዋል። (2) ኃይሉ ለሲረኛነትና ሞረኛነት እምብዛም ዝንባሌና ችሎታ የነበራቸው አይመስልም። ስለዚህ ግሩ ኃይሉን አይረባኝም ብለው ንቀዋቸው ይመስላል ልጃቸው ወለተ ተክሌን አፋተው በአድመኝነታቸውና በሞረኛነታቸው ለታወቁት ለበጌምድሬው ደጃች እንደዋ ሰጡዋቸው። ወዲያውም ኃይሉ ገዛታቸውንና ጉልቶቻቸውን ያጡ ይመስላል። ከዚህ በኋላ ነበር በባላባትነታቸው እስከዚህ ያልታወቁት ወይዘሮ አትጠገብን አግብተው ካሳን የወለዱት። ምንም እንኳ እንደንድ ታሪክ ጸሐፊዎች ካሳ የተወለዱት በባታቸው አገር ቋራ ወይም በናታቸው ቤት እንፍራዝ ነበር ቢሉም እንድ ለዘመኑ ቀረብ ያሉ ግን ስማቸው ያልታወቀ ታሪክ አዋቂ ስለደግማዊ ቴዎድሮስ ዘመነ መንግሥት በጻፉት ዜና መዋዕል ኃይሉ አትጠገብን ያገቡትና ካሳን የወለዱት ከጠላቶቻቸው አምልጠው፤ ጉንደር ገብተው ከአድባራቱ እንደን እስደውለው እንደተቀመጡ ነበር ብለዋል። (3)

የዘመነ መስፍንት መኳንንት የዕለት ተዕለት ተግባራቸው ግዛትና ጉልት መናጠቅ ስለነበር ኃይሉ ጉልቶቻቸውን አጥተው ጎንደር ሲቀመጡ ብዙ ችግር ሳይደርስባቸው አልቀረም። ወይዘሮ አትጠገብ በጎንደር አራዳ ተቀምጠው ከሰና ሌሎች እንደጩና ቅመማ ቅመሞች የመሰበሉትን ትንንሽ ዕቃዎች መሸጥ የጀመሩት በላቸው በሕይወት እንደሉ ይሆናል። አትጠገብ እርግጥ የእንፍራዝ ተወላጅ ከሆኑ የችርቻሮ ንግድን ቀደም ብለው የጀመሩት ሊሆን ይችላል። በዚህ ጊዜ የጉንደር አካባቢ ተራሮች በጥድና በወይራ ብቻ ሳይሆን በኮሶ ዘፍችም

የቴዎድሮስ ዓላማዎች ከየት እንደመነጩ

መርዕድ ወልደ አረጋይ

11 የካቲት 1855 በደረሰጌ ማርያም ቴዎድሮስ ተብለው ዘውድ የጫኑት ሰው እናትና አባታቸው ያወጡላቸው ስም ካሳ ነበር። ከ1820 በፊት በቋራ አውራጃ ተወለዱ። (1) ካሳ ለእናታቸው ለወይዘሮ አትጠገብ እንድልጃቸው ሲሆኑ በአባታቸው በደጃች ኃይሉ ወልደጊዮርጊስ ግን ወንድሞችና ምናልባትም እህቶች ነበሩዋቸው። ደጃች ኃይሉ ከቋራ በላባቶች እንደ በመሆናቸው በዘመኑ የደምቢያ አምባገነን መስፍን የነበሩት የደጃች ማሩ ልጅ ወይዘሮ ወለተ ተክሌን አግብተው ከንፋንና ገብሩን ወልደዋል። (2) ኃይሉ ለሴረኛነትና ሮረኛነት እምብዛም ዝንባሌና ችሎታ የነበራቸው አይመስልም። ስለዚህ ማሩ ኃይሉን አይረባኝም ብለው ንቀዋቸው ይመስላል ልጃቸው ወለተ ተክሌን አፋተው በእድመኝነታቸውና በሮረኛነታቸው ለታወቁት ለበጌምድሬው ደጃች እንደዋ ሰጡዋቸው። ወዲያውም ኃይሉ ግዛታቸውንና ጉልቶቻቸውን ያጡ ይመስላል። ከዚህ በኋላ ነበር በበላባትነታቸው እስከዚህ ያልታወቁት ወይዘሮ አትጠገብን አግብተው ካሳን የወለዱት። ምንም እንኳ እንደንድ ታሪክ ጸሐፊዎች ካሳ የተወለዱት በባታቸው አገር ቋራ ወይም በናታቸው ቤት አንፍራዝ ነበር ቢሉም እንድለዘመኑ ቀረብ ያሉ ግን ስማቸው ያልታወቀ ታሪክ አዋቂ ስለደግማዊ ቴዎድሮስ ዘመነ መንግሥት በጸፉት ዜና መዋዕል ኃይሉ አትጠገብን ያገቡትና ካሳን የወለዱት ከጠላቶቻቸው አምልጠው፤ ጉንደር ገብተው ከአድባራቱ እንደን አስደውለው እንደተቀመጡ ነበር ብለዋል። (3)

የዘመነ መስፍንት መኳንንት የዕለት ተዕለት ተግባራቸው ግዛትና ጉልት መናጠቅ ስለነበር ኃይሉ ጉልቶቻቸውን አጥተው ጎንደር ሲቀመጡ ብዙ ችግር ሳይደርስባቸው አልቀረም። ወይዘሮ አትጠገብ በጎንደር አራዳ ተቀምጠው ከሰና ሌሎች እንደዉውና ቅመማ ቅመሞች የመሰሰሉትን ትንንሽ ዕቃዎች መሸጥ የጀመሩት በላቸው በሕይወት እንዳሉ ይሆናል። አትጠገብ እርግጥ የእንፍራዝ ተወላጅ ከሆኑ የችርቻሮ ንግድን ቀደም ብለው የጀመሩት ሊሆን ይችላል። በዚህ ጊዜ የጉንደር አካባቢ ተራሮች በጥድና በወይራ ብቻ ሳይሆን በኮሰ ዛፎችም

በመሸፈናቸው በዘመነ መስፍንት ጦርነቶች ምክንያት ብዙ ያለ ወረ የቀሩ እርጊቶችና ባሎቻቸውን ያጡ ቅሪዎች ባነስተኛ ነገር ከሰውን ከባለገሮች በመለወጥ፤ ይህን በመሸጥና በጥብጠው በማጠጣት የጨዋ ለማኝ ከመሆን ድነዋል።

ከሰ ከተወለደ በኋላ አባታቸው ምን ያህል በሕይወት እንደቶዩ አይታወቅም። የሚመስለው ከሰ ገና ልጅ ሳሉ አባታቸውን እንደጡ ነው። ለዚህም ሳይሆን አይቀርም ከሰን የማይወደ ሁሉ የዛች የከሰ ሽጭ ልጅ እያሉ ያንኳሰሷቸው የነበሩት።

ቋራንና ደምቢያን አጣምረው በመገዛት ያልረኩት ደጃች ማሩ ከደምቢያ በታች አሰሩንና ጣቁሰን በስተሰሜን ደግሞ እንደንድ የወገራ ወረዳዎችን ለመጨመር ሲሉ ብዙ ተዋግተዋል። የንጉሠ ነገሥቱን ክብርና ሥልጣን በመገፈፍ ገቢውንም በመንጠቅ በነገሥታቱ ስም ኢትዮጵያን ለማስተዳደር የሞከሩት የየጅ መስፍንት ማሩን ይፈረዋቸው ነበር። ታላቁ የየጅ መስፍን ራስ ጉግሳ (የገዙት 1800-1826) ልጃቸውን ወለተ ተክሌን በመደርና አገው ምድርን ጨምረው በመስጠት የማሩን ታማኝነት ለማረጋገጥ ችለዋል። እነዚህ ሁሉ እገሮች እስካሁን ድረስ ባንድ መስፍን ስር ተጠቃለው ባለመገዛታቸው በታሪክ የማሩ ቅምስ እየተባሉ ይታወሳሉ።

የጉግሳ ተቀናቃኞች የደሞቱ ደጃች ዘውዴ፤ የወረሂመኖው አመደ ሊበንና የትግራይ ራስ ወልደ ሥላሴ ኃይለኞች ስለነበሩ የማሩ ታማኝነትና ድጋፍ ጠቅሟቸዋል። ራስ ጉግሳ ለሀያ ስድስት ዓመታት ገዝተው ሲሞቱ የተኩዋቸው ታላቅ ልጃቸው፤ ራስ ይማም፤ የማሩን ታማኝነት ለማቶየት አልቻሉም። ለዚህም ሁለት ምክንያቶች ነበሩ። ባንድ በኩል የራስ ይማም ወንድም ራስ ደሪ የበላይ መስፍንነቱን ፈለጉ። ራስ ደሪና የማሩ ሚስት ወለተ ተክሌ ከንድ እናት በመወለዳቸው ማሩ ወደ ደሪ እደሉ። ሁለተኛው ምክንያት ደግሞ ወገራን በሞላ ለመያዝ ማሩም የሰሜኑ ደጃች ውቤም ከመፈለጋቸው የመነጨ ችግር ነበር። በማሩ ለመተማመን ያልቻሉት ይማም ወገራን ለሁለት ከፍለው በመስጠት ውቤን ከጎናቸው አሰለፉ። ቀደም ብለው ልጃቸውን ለውቤ ድረው የነበሩት ማሩ ተቀየሙና ከውቤም ከይማምም ተጣሉ። ከደጃች ጎሹ ዘውዴና ሌሎች አጋሮች ጋር ሆነው ሁለቱን በተለያዩ ጊዜያት ቢወጉም በመጨረሻ ሁለቱም ጎጂም ድረስ አሳደው

ማሩን እሸነፉዋቸው። ማሩ በዚህ ጥቅምት 1827 በተደረገው የክሰ በር ጦርነት ትስለው ሞቱ።

የማሩ የልጅ ልጅ ደጃች ክንፉ ኃይሉ በጦር ጫዳው ተገኝተው ነበርና ተማረኩ። የማሩ ልጆች በውጊያው ስለመሰተፉባቸው የሚታወቅ ነገር የለም። በኋላ ክንፉ እንደ የማሩ ወራሽ ተቶጥረው ቋራንና ደምቢያን መግዛት ሲጃምሩ እንደ ካሳ ማሩ የተባለ ሰው ቋራ ውስጥ ሸፍቶ ትንሽ እስቸግሯቸዋል። ምናልባትም ማሩ ከወለተ ተክሌና ከሌሎች ሴቶች በስተቀር ወንዶች አልወለዱም ይሆናል።(4)የሆነ ሆኖ ከማሩ ወራሾች መካከል ክንፉ ይበልጥ እስጊ ሁነው ተገኝተው በእንድ እምባ ታሰሩ። ማሩ ቅምስ የተባሉት አገሮች በፊት እንደነበሩት ራስ ይግም ለሌላው ወንድማቸው ለራስ ማርዬ ሰጡ። ማርዬ ግን እንደቸውንም የማሩ ቅምስ አገሮች በሰላም ለመግዛት አልቻሉም። ይገባኛል በማለት በየመንደሩ ሸፍቶ ካስቸገራቸው ይልቅ የወንድማቸው የራስ ደሪ ፋክክር ባሰባቸው።

በዜና መዋዕሎቹ ውስጥ ጎልተው የሚታዩት የራስ ጉግሳ ልጆች እራት ሲሆኑ፤እነሱም አሉለ፤ ይማም፤ ማርዬና ደሪ ነበሩ። አሉለ ገና አባታቸው በሕይወት ሳሉ ሞተዋል። እንዲሁም ከራስ ጉግሳ ሴቶች ልጆች እራቱ በደንብ ይታወቃሉ። ወይዘሮ አስቲር የሚባሉት መጃመሪያ ለደሞት ባለባት ለሆኑት ለደጃች ወልደሩፋኤል፤ እኒህ ከሞቱ በኋላ ለተምቤን ባለባት ለደጃች ገብረ ሚካኤል ተድረዋል። ወይዘሮ ጊሩት የሰሜኑን ባለባት ደጃች ኃይለማርያምን አግብተው መርሰን፤ ብጡልንና የውብደርን ወልደዋል። ደጃች ውቤም የኃይለማርያም ልጅ ሲሆኑ እናታቸው በሰሜን ወረዳ የጀን አሞራ ባለባቶች ልጅ ከሆነችው ይወለዳሉ። አራተኛዋ፤ ወይዘሮ ትርንጎ የላሰታው ባለባት ዋግሹም ክንፉን አገቡ። እንደዋን በማደከም ግዛት ለመቀማት ክንፉ ከፍተኛ ምኞት ስለነበራቸው የእንደዋ አጋርና አማት ከሆኑት ከደጃች ማሩ ጋር ስለተጣሉ እሸከራቸው ነበር በክሰ በር ጦርነት ማሩን በጥይት መትቶ የገደለቸው። ይማም፤ ማርዬና አስቲር ካንዲት እናት ሲወለዱ ደሪና ለማሩ የተደሩት ወለተ ተክሌ ደግሞ በእናትም እንደልተለያዩ ከላይ ተገልጿል። ከማሩ ሞት በኋላ በይማምና በማሩ የተነሳው አለመግባባት ማሩ ቅምስ አገሮችን ደሪ ለራሳቸው ፈልገው ሳይሆን ምናልባት ለወለተ ተክሌ ወይም ከልጆቻቸው መካከል ለንደ መስጠት አለበት ብለው ስለተከራከሩ ይሆናል።

ይህን አስተያየት የሚደግፍ ሁኔታ የአንደዋ ከግርዶ ጋር
 መጣለት ነው። እንደዋ የወለተ ተክሌ በልና የክንፉ እንጂራ አበት
 መሆናቸው ይታወቃል። ነገርቹ በዚህ እንደሉ ራስ ይግም ሞቱ።
 በመስፍንነቱም ራስ ግርዶ ተተኩ። እግረ መንገደቸውን አንደዋ ክንፉን
 ከታሰሩበት እምባ አስወጡ። ክንፉ ወደአያታቸው ግዛቶች ወደ
 ደም ቢያና ቋራ ቢገቡ ብዙ ተከታዎች አገኙ፤ በግርዶ ለይ
 መሸፈታቸውም ታወቀ። በመካከሉ የእንጂራ አበታቸው እንደዋ ግርዶን
 ለመውጋት ወደ ደብረ ታበር ተጠጉ። ከክንፉ ስምምነት ኖሯቸው
 እንደሆነ አይታወቅም፤ ገን ለገንቸው ለሆኑ ለወታደራቸውም ስለነሱ
 ይመስላል፤ ተሸነፉና በጦር ሜዳው ወደቁ። ግርዶ ገን የበላይ መስፍን
 በመሆናቸው ተቀናቃኞቻቸው እንደሚበዙ ስለወቁ ከክንፉ ጋር
 መታረቁን መረጡ። የማሩ ቅምስን ግዛቶች መረቁለቸው፤ ትንሽም
 ቶ የት ብለው የእህታቸው የወይዘሮ አስቲር ልጅ የትመኙን
 ደሩለቸው። (5) የወይዘሮ የትመኙ አበት ግን እንደሆኑ አይታወቅም።
 ገን አበታቸው የደሞት ገዢ የነበሩት ደጃች ወልደሩፋኤል ከሆኑ
 የትመኙ ለምን ለክንፉ እንደተደሩ ግልጽ ይሆናል። ከጎጂም
 እውራጃዎች መካከል በጣም ተዋጊ የሆኑ ወታደሮችና ጦረኞች የሆኑ
 በላባቶች የሚፈልቁበት ደሞት ነበር። ዘመነ መስፍንት ሲከሰት ለየጀ
 መስፍንት ከፍተኛ ተፎካካሪ የሆኑት የደሞት በላባት ደጃች ዘውዲ
 አገውምድርንና ጎጂምን በሥራቸው አድርገው ራሳቸው የንጉሥ ቀኝ
 እጅና የበላይ መስፍን ለመሆን አስበው ነበር። ስለዚህም ከራስ ጉግሳ
 ለረጅም ጊዜ ተቀራቁለዋል። ጉግሳም ደጃች ማሩንና ሌላው የደሞት
 በላባትና የዘውዲ በላንግ የሆኑት ደጃች ወልደሩፋኤልን በመያዝ
 ዘውዲን በ1806 አሸነፉ። ዘውዲ ከጦር ሜዳው በመለጡ በአመቱ
 ወልደሩፋኤል ያዙዋቸውና ለጉግሳ ሰጡ። ዘውዲ ለረጅም ጊዜ
 ከታሰሩበት በጨቅላ መንዘ ደሴት ሞቱ። ጉግሳ ወለተ ተክሌንና
 አገውምድርን ለማሩ፤ አስቲርንና ደሞትን ለወልደሩፋኤል የሰጡበት
 ምክንያት ይህ ነበር።

የጎጂም በላባቶች ለዘመናት ከጎንደር ቤተ መንግሥት ጋር በመጋባት
 ሰማቸውና ትልቅነታቸው እንደታወቅ በማድረጋቸው ጉግሳ
 እንደያንስራሩ ብለው እውራጃዎቹን ለታማኝ ሎሌዎቻቸው
 ቢያከፋፍሉም የዘውዲ ልጅ ጎሹ ቀስ በቀስ እየበረቱ ሄዱ። በጉግሳና
 በደጃች ወልደሩፋኤል መካከል ምን እንደተፈጠረ አይታወቅም፤
 ወልደሩፋኤል ታሰሩ። ሚስታቸው አስቲርም ለተምቤኑ በላባት ለደጃች

ገብረሚካኤል ተሰጡ። ጉግሳ ከገብረሚካኤል ጋር የተወደጀበት ምክንያት ደግሞ እኒህ ሰው ባንድ በኩል የራስ ወልደሥላሴ የወንድም ልጅና ተተኪ ሆነው እንደርታን ከሚገዙት መስፍን በሌላ በኩል ደግሞ ኃይል እያገኙ ራሳቸውን በጦረኛነታቸው ማስተዋወቅ ከጀመሩት ከሰሃው በላባት ከሰባጋደስ ጋር በመግለታቸው ነበር።

ወልደሩፋኤልን ነፃነታቸውን፣ ግዛታቸውንና ሚስታቸውን ከሰጡዋቸው በኋላ ጉግሳ ልጃቸው አሉላን የደሞት ገዢ አደረጉዋቸው። ብዙ አመት ደሞት ከተቀመጡ በኋላ አሉላ ሞቱ። ጉግሳ ግዛቱን ለወንድማቸው ልጅ ለጎበና ለመስጠት በመዘጋጀት ላይ ሳሉ ከደጃች ማሩ የማይገባቡ በመሆናቸው በማሩ ጥያቄ ደሞት ለወለተ ተክሌ ወንድም ለደሪ ተሰጠ። ሁኔታዎች በዚህ እንደሉ ነበር ይማም ባባታቸው ምትክ የበላይ መስፍን የሆኑት። በማሩና በደሪ መካከል የነበረውን ፍቅር በመፍራት ይማም ከማሩ ጋር በስምምነት ለመኖር ሞክረዋል። ደሩ ግን የዘመነ መስፍንት ወደጅነት አስተማማኝ አልነበረምና የማሩን ታማኝነት በመጠራጠር ከሌላ ከሚፈሩት ጦረኛ ሰው፣ ከሰሜን በላባት ከውቤ ጋር ተቀራረቡ። ማሩና ውቤ ሁለቱም ዓይኖቻቸውን በወገራ ላይ ጥለው ነበርና የይማምና የውቤ አጋር መሆን ማሩን ከጎሹ ዘውደ ጋር እንደወደጀ አስገደደቸው። በኮሶ በር የተዋጉት ባንድ ወገን ማሩና ጎሹ በሌላ ወገን ይማምና ውቤ ሁነው ነበር።

ይህ ሁሉ ሁኔታ በመጀመሪያ በክንፉ ኃይሉ ኋላ ደግሞ በወጣቱ በካሳ ኃይሉ ዓይኖች ሲታይ ችግር ፈጣሪዎቹና፣ ሰውን ከሰው አጋዉዎቹ የየጀ መሰፍንቱ ባጠቃለይ፣ ይማምና ማርዬ ደግሞ በተለይ ነበሩ። ምንም እንኳን ማርዬ የማሩ ቅምስ ግዛቶችን ለክንፉ ቢመለሱና የእህታቸውን ልጅ ቢድሩላቸውም ለም የሆነችው ደምቢያን በሰላም እንደማያስገዙዋቸው አውቀዋል።

ደምቢያ ፈላጊዋም በላተኛዋም ብዙ ነበር። ከሰፊው የጣና ሰሜናዊ ዳርቻ በስተምዕራብ እስከ አላፋና ቋራ ሸለቆች፣ በስተሰሜን እስከ ወገራና ወይና ደጋ ሸንተረሮች የተንግለለች ስትሆን፣ በውስጧ አባጣ ጎባጣ ያልበዘበት ለእርሻ በጣም ምቹ የሆነች አገር ነች። እስከ አስራስድስተኛው ክፍለ ዘመን በአገሩ አገውኛ ተናጋሪ በላባቶች ስትተዳደር ቶይታለች። የኢትዮጵያ ነገሥታት ሸዋን ለቀው መጀመሪያ በእንፍራዝ አካባቢ ቀጥሎ ደግሞ በጉንደር ከትመው ሲቀመጡ፣

ለራሳቸው ለቤተሰቦቻቸውና ለተከታዮቻቸው መተዳደሪያ ገቢ ያገኙት የነበረው ከዚህ በፊት ከደምቢያና በስተምሥራት ለጥቃ ከምትገኘውና ወጣ ገባ ካልበዘበት እንፍራዝ ነበር። ሁለቱም አገሮች ወዲያው ኑ የቤተመንግሥት ጉልቶች ሲደርጉ ሰፊና ለምለግ ደምቢያ በተለይ በኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ያፂ ቶሎ እየተበላሹ ስትጠራ ቶይታለች። (6) የጉንደር ነገሥታት ሥልጣንና ኃይልን ከደከሙት ምክንያቶች እንደ የደምቢያን ምርታማ ማሰዎች ቀስ በቀስ ለተከሉዋቸው ደብሮች መተዳደሪያ ለስቸገሯቸው ከሀፍትና መኪንንት ሪምና መተከያ በማለት አድለው በመጨረሻቸው ራሳቸውን ማደግየታቸው ነበር። የነገሥታት የቶሎ መሬት በመሆን በተነቀሉት የጥንት በላባቶች ለገር ሌሎች አልተተኩባትም። ትክለኛዋ ቂስና ደብተራ በመሆኑ ገዛት የሌለቸው ያከባቢ ጎበዞች ደምቢያን ይዘው ወደላቀ ግዛትና ማዕረግ ለመቶናጠጥ ሲሉ ተፋትገውበታል። ተጨማሪ የቀለብ ምንጭ በማግኘት የወታደሮቻቸውን ቁጥር ለማብዛት የፈለጉ የጎረቤት መኪንንትም ተማመተውበታል።

ደጃች ክንፋ ያያታቸው ግዛቶች በሙሉ፤ ማለትም አገው ምድርን ጭምር፤ በለማግኘታቸው ቅር ቢሰኙም ደምቢያን እንደይነጠቁ ፈርተው ለራስ ማርዩ ታማኝ ሆነው እንደቀመጡ ተገደዱ። የዘመነ መሰፍንት ወደጃነትና በለግሏነት ከአለት ወደ አለት ተለዋዋጭ ስለነበር ከማርዩ ጋር የሚያጣላ ሁኔታ እንደይነሳባቸው አትኩረው ሲጠበቁ ከወደሱዳን በኩል ብቻቸውን ሊቋቋሙት የማይችሉት ጠላት ተነሳባቸው። በ1821 ሱዳንን ቅኝ ግዛቷ ያደረገችው ግብጽ የኢትዮጵያን ምዕራባዊ ወሰን መድፈር የጀመረችው ወዲያው ኑ ሱዳን እንደያዘች ቢሆንም ግፈቷ የጠነከረው ራስ ጉግሳና ደጃች ማሩ ከሞቱ በኋላ ሆነ።

የግብጽ ገዢ መሐመድ አሊ ግዛቱን ከፈውደል ስልተምርት እውጥቶ ወደካፒታሊስት ሥርዓት ለመግፋት አስቦ የገንዘብና የሰው ኃይል ምንጭ ለማግኘት ሲል ሱዳንን ወረረ። በዚህን ጊዜ ግብጽ የኦቶማን ቱርክ ግዛት በመሆን ትውልደ አልባንያዊ የሆነው መሐመድ አሊ በ1799 የወታደሮች አለቃ ሆኖ ወደ ግብጽ ተላከ። ከአንድ ዓመት በፊት ማለትም በ1798 የፈረንሳይ መሪ ናፖሌዎን በናፓርት ጦሩን እየመራ ግብጽ አገር እንደገባ እንግሊዞች ያለ የሌለውን የባሕር ኃይላቸውን ልከው ከከበቡት በኋላ ጦሩን ትቶ እንደሸሸ አስገድደውት ነበር። ሁለቱ የእውሮፓ ኃያል መንግሥቶች እስከ ግብጽ ድረስ መጥተው የተዋጉበት

ምክንያት ግብጽን ወደፊት ለአውሮፓና ለእስያ እንዲሁም ለአውስትራሊያ መገናኛ ድልድይ በማድረግ ሊጠቀሙበት እንደረለጉ መሐመድ አሊ ተገነዘበ። ግብጽ በአውሮፓ አገሮች ሽኩቻ እንደትረበሽ ወይም እንደትረገጥ ብሎ ከኋላ ቀርነቷ መጥቃ እንድትወጣና የኢኮኖሚ አቋምዋና የፖለቲካ ሥርዓትዋን ዘመናዊ ለማድረግ ወሰነ። ከፊውደል ወደ ካፒታሊስት ሥርዓት ለማሸጋገርና የሰለጠነ የሰው ኃይልና በተለይ ደግሞ በደንብ የታጠቀ ጦር ሠራዊት ለመፍጠር ከፍተኛ መነሻ ካፒታል ማሰራጨትን የተገነዘበው መሐመድ አሊ በቀይ ባሕር ግራና ቀኝ ያሉትን አገሮች በግብጽ ይዘታ ውስጥ በማሰገባት ከሕዝቦቻቸው በነፍስ ወከፍ ግብር ለመሰብሰብና ከነጋዴዎቻቸውና ከገበያዎቻቸው ቀረጥ ለማጋበስ አቀደ።

እነዚህን አካባቢዎች በፍጥነት በግብጽ እጅ ለማሰገባት የተቻሉበት ሌላው ትልቁ ምክንያት ደግሞ እንግሊዞች በነሱ ላይ አይናቸውን ጣል ማድረግ መጀመራቸው ነበር። ከአስራ ሰባተኛው ክፍለ ዘመን መካከል ጀምሮ የእንግሊዝ የቅመማ ቅመምና የቡና ነጋዴዎች ወኪሎቻቸውን በሞካ ቢያስቀምጡም መንግሥታቸው የቀይ ባሕርን ኢኮኖሚያዊና ስትራቴጂካዊ ጥቅም መገንዘብ የጀመረው ከአስራ ዘጠነኛው ክፍለ ዘመን መባቻ፣ ማለትም ከፈረንሣይ ጋር በግብጽ አካባቢ ከደረገው ጦርነት፣ በኋላ ነበር። ከ1804 እስከ 1806 ሰር ጆርጅ አነሰሊ፣ ቫይካውንት ቫሌንቲያና ጸሐፊያቸው ሔንሪ ሶልት ስለ ኢደን፣ ሞካ፣ ምጽዋ፣ ዘይላና ሌሎች የቀይ ባሕር ወደቦችና እንዲሁም ስለ አቀማመጣቸውና ንግዳቸው በዝርዝር አጥንተው ለእንግሊዝ መንግሥትና ለሕንድ አገረ ገዢ ዘገባ አቀረቡ። ቫሌንቲያ ገና በቀይ ባሕር እንዳሉ ጸሐፊያቸው ሶልትን ወደ ራስ ወልደ ሥላሴ፣ የትግራይ መስፍን፣ልከው በኒህ መስፍን በኩል ከኢትዮጵያ ጋር ወደጅነትና የንግድ ልውውጥ ለመጀመር ሞከሩ። ለሁለተኛ ጊዜ በ1809 ሶልት ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ገብቶ ከራስ ጉግሳ ጋር በነበራቸው የሥልጣን ፋክክር ምክንያት ራስ ወልደሥላሴ ጉንደር ድረስ ለመሄድ ባይረዱትም የተጀመረውን ወደጅነት ሥር በማስያዝ እንዲረዱት አስቦ ናትናኢል ፒርስና ዊሊያም ኮፊን የተባሉ ሌሎች እንግሊዞችን ከላቸው ጋር ትቶ ወደገሩ ተመለሰ።(7)

ቀጥሎም የእንግሊዝ ትልልቅ ኩባንያዎች ያቋቋሙት «የአፍሪካን የመሃል ክፍሎች ጥናት ለማካሄድ የተቋቋመ ማኅበር» በተባለ ድርጅት

በኩል እንደሌዊስ በርካሃርድትና ጀርጅ ዋደንግቶን የመሰሰሉ ተመራጭ ሊቃውንት ከግብጽ እስከ ስናር ያለውን አባይ ሸለቆ በጥልቀት እያዩ እያጠያየቁ አጠኑ። ይህ ሁሉ ከመሐመድ አሊ አልተሰወረምና ሰልቀደም ልቅደም ወደግራ ውሳኔ ገፋፋው።

በውሳኔው መሠረት ዕቅዶችን አውጥቶ እውን ግድረግ ጀመረ። በ1813 የአሁንዋ ሰውዲት አረብን ወረረ። ከረጅም ዘመቻ በኋላ በ1818 የግብጽ በላይነት ሲረጋገጥ ልጅን ሊብራሂምን የሐጃዝና የሀበሽ ገዢ ብሎ ሸመው። ኢትዮጵያን ከአረብ አገር ጋር ቀላቅሎ እንደንድ ግዛት ለማየት የከጀለበት ምክንያት ቀደም በሉ ዓመታት የምጽዋ ናይቦች ሹመታቸውን የሚያገኙት በጀዳ ከተማ ከሚቀመጠው የቱርክ ፓሽ ነበርና በዚህ ከረጅም ጊዜ በፊት በቀረው ሁኔታ በመጠቀም የቀይ ባሕር ግራና ቀኝ ጠረፎችን በጀ ለማስገባት አለበ። የኢትዮጵያን የቀይ ባሕር ጠረፍ እንዲሁም የጀቡቲና የሰማሊያ የሕንድ ውትያኖስ ጠረፍ እንድ ላይ በግድረግ የግብጽ ግዛት መሆኑ እንደታወቅለት የደኘሎማቲክ ቅስቀሰ ጀመረ። ብዙም ሳይቶይ በ1820 ሱዳንን በመውረርና የሱዳን የቀይ ባሕር ጠረፍ በመያዝ ኢትዮጵያን ከበባት። ሆኖም ወታደሮቹ ድምበር በግለፍ ኢትዮጵያን ወዲያውኑ አልወረሩም። ለዚያም ሰለት ምክንያቶች ነበሩ።

ምንም እንኳን በዚህ ጊዜ ሱዳን በብዙ አናሳ መንግሥቶች በመከፋፈል ለግብጽ ጠንካራ ተቃውሞ በታደርገው የፋንጅ ሕዝብ በቀላሉ እጅን አልሰጠም። ቀደም በሉ ዘመናት ዋና ከተማው ስናር የነበረ የፋንጅ መንግሥት ግዛቱ ከከሰለ በስተምዕራብ በኩል እስከ ታች ፋዙግሊ ይደርስ ነበር። አሁን ቢደከሙም የደር ታላቅነታቸውን በማስታወስ የግብጽን ዉቋኝና በዝባኝ አስተዳደር መቀበል አቃታቸው። በ1822 በሸንዲና ሌሎች የፋንጅ ከተሞች ብዙ የግብጽ ወታደሮች ከዋናው የጦር አዝማቹ ጭምር ገደሉ። ይህን የአርበኝነት ተቃውሞ የመራና ያቀነበበረ ጫካ ኒምር የሚባል በላባት ከፍተኛ ጦር ሲላክበት ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ገብቶ በወሰን ተቀምጦ ማስቸገሩን ቀጥሏል።(8)

ሁለተኛው ምክንያት ደግሞ ኢትዮጵያን እንደይወር ከእንግሊዝ መንግሥት ለመሐመድ አሊ ማስጠንቀቂያ ስለደረሰው ነበር። በቫይካውንት ቫሌንቲያና በሔንሪ ሶልት ጥናታዊ ጉዞዎች በመመርኮዝ የእንግሊዝ መንግሥት ከኢትዮጵያ ጋር የንግድ ግንኙነት ለመመሥረት

ግብጽ ከላይ ተነስቷል። መሐመድ አሊ በአፍሪካ ቀንድና በቀይ ባሕር አካባቢ የሚያካሄደውን ፖለቲካ ለመከታተል ፈልጎ ይመሰላል የእንግሊዝ መንግሥት ሔንሪ ሶልትን በካይሮ ቶንሰል ሾመው። ሔንሪ ሶልትና የእንግሊዝ መንግሥት ከኢትዮጵያ ጋር ለመጀመር የፈለጉት የንግድ ግንኙነት እንዳይበላሽባቸው ሲሉ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ቢገፋ ጥቅማቸውን እንደሚፃረር ስለሰረዱት ወታደሮቹን እንዳይገቡ አደረገ።

የግብጽ ወታደሮች የኢትዮጵያን ወሰን በግልጽ ከመግለጽ ያገደቸው ዋናውና ስስተኛው ምክንያት ግን ብልሃትና ጥንካሬን ያቀናጁ የራስ ጉግሳ አገዛዝ ሰይሆን አይቀርም። ከሰማኒያ አራቱ የዘመነ መሰፍንት ዓመታት የየጁ መሰፍንት ለሰባ አምስቱ ያህል የበላይነት ተቀዳጅተው እነሱ ያነገሡዋቸው ብቻ ጎንደር ተቀምጠው ሊቆዩ የቻሉት በጦረኛነታቸው ሰይመኩ ለአመራራቸው ብልሃትና ምህረት ስለወመሩለት ነበር። ራስ ጉግሳ በተለይ በጋብቻና በሹመት ነበር የዘመኑን አድመኞችና አዋኪዎች ይበልጥ ከማስቸገር ያገደዋቸው። የግብጽ ወታደሮች በ1820 የፋንጅ ግዛትን ይዘው ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ወሰን ሲጠጉ ወደ ጉንደር መልእክተኞች ልከው ስለ ጉርብትናቸው ለማብሰር ያሰቡትም የጉግሳን ኃይል በመፍራታቸው ይሆናል። እንደዚሁም ወደ 1827 ወሰኑን ጥሰው ቋራን ለመውረር የደፈሩትም ስለጉግሳ ሞትና ስለማሩና ይማም መግለት ሰምተው ይሆናል።(9) ይህ በይሆንማ ኖሮ የግብጽ የጦር አዝማቹን ከነሠራዊቱ የፈጀባቸውን ሚክ ኒምርን፣ ለሌሎች የፋንጅ ባለባቶች መቀጣጫ እንዲሆን ብለው፣ አሳደው በያዙት ወይም በገደሉት ነበር።

ግብጽ በምዕራብ ኢትዮጵያ በኩል ማካሄድ ስለጀመረችው ግፊት ስንናገር የወሰኑ ሁኔታ ከዚህ ጊዜ በፊት እንዴት እንደነበር ጥርት ብሎ አለመታወቁ የግንዛቤ ችግር ይፈጥርብናል። የፋንጅ መንግሥት ስናርን ዋና ከተማው በማድረግ በ1504 ገደማ ሲመሠረት የኢትዮጵያ ምዕራባዊ ይዘታ ሰፋ ያለ እንደነበር የሚያሳዩ ፍንጮች አሉ። ከ1520 እስከ 1526 የተለያዩ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍሎችን የጎበኘና ስለነሱም ሰፋ አድርጎ የጻፈው የፖርቱጋላ ፍራንሲስኮ አልቫራዝ ስለምዕራባዊ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍሎች ምንም ያህል አለማወቁን ቢገልጽም የኢትዮጵያና የሱዳን ወሰን ከሱዋኪን በታች እንደሚጀምር ከጠቀሰ በኋላ በጎንደር በኩል ወደ አትባራና ትልቁ አባይ፣ በጎጃም በኩል ደግሞ ወርቅ በብዛት ወደሚገኝበት ወደ ፋዙግሊ ገባ እንደሚል አመልክቷል። ይበልጥ ዘርዘር

ያለ ፍንጭ የሚገልጥ የመናዊው ሺህብ ኢድ ዲን ስለገራኝ ወረራ በጸረው መጽሐፉ ውስጥ ነው። የመረብ ወንዝ እሸዋ ለይ ተኝቶ ጉዞውን የሚያቋርጥበት ታካ የሚባል አካባቢ በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ እንደነበር ይህ ደራሲ ይጠቁማል። ቀጥሎም በትግራይ በተደረጉት ውጊያዎች ብዙ፤ በጎሳ የፋንጅ ዜጎች የሆኑ፤ ብሔረሰቦች ከክርስቲያኖቹ ጎን ሆነው መዋጋታቸውን ያሳያል። ይህም ሊሆን የቻለው የሺራና የጉንደር አስተዳዳሪዎች ያደረጉትን የክተት ጥሪ ተቀብለው ቢመጡ ነው። (10) አልቫራዝና ሺህብ ኢድ ዲን በኢትዮጵያ የቶዩት ቤተ መንግሥቱ ሸዋ በነበረበት ጊዜ ስለሆነ ራት ስለለው ምዕራባዊ ወሰን የሚነግሩዋቸው ብዙ ሰዎች በቀላሉ አላገኙም ይሆናል።

ስለምዕራባዊው ወሰን ሁኔታ ዘርዘር ያለ መረጃ ግግኙት የምንጀምረው ከእስራ ሰባተኛው ክፍለ ዘመን ወዲህ ነው። መናገሻ ከተማው መጀመሪያ በተለያዩ የደምቢያና የእንፍራዝ ስፍራዎች በጎሳ ደግሞ በጉንደር በተተከለበት ጊዜ ከፋንጅ ጋር ጉርብትናው ስለተጠናከረ በሁለቱም አገሮች በየጊዜው የተፈጠሩ የሰላምና የጠብ ግንኙነቶች በዚያ መዋዕሎቻቸው አልፎ አልፎ ተንጸባርቀዋል።

ምክንያቶቹ ግልጽ ብለው ባይታወቁም በሱስንዮስ ዘመን፤ በ1618 ና 1619፤ ሁለቱ አገሮች ከፍ ያለ ጦርነት እካሂደዋል። በግምት የግጥቱ መነሻዎች ፋዙግሊ ውስጥ የደለል ወርት የሚታጠብባቸው በታዎችን ለመያዝና ከመተማ እስከ ስናር ያሉትን ገበያዎችና የነጋዴ መናኸሪያዎች ለመቆጣጠር ያደረባቸው ፍላጎቶች ይመስላሉ። የሱስንዮስ ዜና መዋዕል እንደሚያሳየው የፋንጅ መንግሥት በውስጣዊ የሥልጣን ሽኩቻ ምክንያት ተደክሞ ነበርና የንጉሡ ጭፍራዎች ከሱዋኪን በስተደቡብ ጀምረው እስከ ፋዙግሊ ድረስ ተሰግርተው ድል ተቀናጀና የተለያዩ ባለባቶችን ማስገበር ጀመሩ። ከዚህም የተነሳ የኢትዮጵያ ወሰን ከሱዋኪን በታች ከምትገኘው በታ ከቶካር ጀምሮ እስከ ፋዙግሊ ድረስ ወደ ምዕራብ ገፍቶዋል። ጦርነት ከተካሄደባቸው ወደ ምዕራብ ገባ ካሉ ስፍራዎች እርምጃ ገደረፍ ይገኛቸዋል። (11)

ሆኖም ከ1625 ጀምሮ በኢትዮጵያ በተቀሰቀሰው የሃይማኖት ሁከት ምክንያት ቀደም ብለው የተያዙት ስፍራዎች እየተለቀቁ ሳይሄዱ አልቀረም። ፋሲል አባታቸው ሱስንዮስን ተክተው በዙፋኑ እንደተቀመጡ የነበረውን ሁከት በማረጋጋትና በቅባቶችና በተዋሕዶች

አዲስ የተነሳውን ጭቅጭቅ በግብታገስ ላይ ሰባተኩሩ ከፋንጅ መንግሥት ጋር ጥሩ ገንኙነት መሠረቱ። ከቶሊክ ሚስጥናውያን ወደአገር ገብተው የተረጋጋውን የሃይማኖት ሁከት እንዲቀሰቅሱባቸው በተለይ ይፈሩ ነበርና በስናር በኩል እንደያሳልፋባቸው ሊሉ ከፋንጅ ንጉሦች ልዩ ስምምነትም ተስማምተዋል።

በቅባትና ተዋሕዶ ትምህርቶች ደጋፊዎች መካከል የተባበሰው ንትርክ ከኢኮኖሚያዊ ችግር ጋር በመደበለት የግእዝላዊ መንግሥቱን መሠረት አናጋው። ቀስ በቀስ እንደ የቅባት ሌላ ጊዜ የተዋሕዶ ደጋፊ በመምሰል በመንግሥት ላይ የሚሸፍቱት በዜጎች። የኢትዮጵያን ክፍሎች በሕገና በሰነሥርዓት የሚያስተዳድሩትን በኃይል ከየሹመታቸው በግባረር እነዚህ ጦረኞች ዘበናቶች ሥልጣን ያዙና ነገሥታቱን ባለመታዘዝ፣ ገበሬውንና ነጋዴውን በመበዝበዝ አገሪቷን ሰለም ነሷት። በቀዳማዊ ኢያሱ ብርታት የምጽዋ ናይቦች የንጉሡን በላይነት ወደ ግወጅ ተቃርበው ነበር። ገን ጦረኛው ራስ ሚካኤል ስሑል የትግራይ ባላባቶችን እንድትባባሱ አጥፍተው የንጉሡንም ኃይል መፈታተን በመጀመራቸው ለምጽዋ ንግድ ትልቅ እንቅፋት ሆኑ። የፋንጅ ነገሥታት በነዚህ የውስጥ ችግሮች በመጠቀም ወደ ምሥራቅ ግፊት በመጀመራቸው ይመስላል በ1744 ደግሞዊ ኢያሱ ትልቅ ጦር አስከትለው ወደ ፋንጅ ገዛት ዘልቀው ገቡ። ዘመቻው ቀላል አልነበረም። የፋንጅ ገዛትን፣ በተለይ ከስናር ወዲህና ወዲያ የነበረውን የንግድ መስመር ለመያዝ ያሰቡ ይመስላል።(12) ገን ዋና ከተማዋ ስናር አጠገብ ሲደርሱ ጦራቸው ከፋኛ ተሸነፈ። የሞተውም የተግረከውም ብዙ ነበር። ምናልባት የመሸነፋቸው ምክንያት ከአስተማማኝ ይዘታቸውና ቀለብ ከሚያገኙበት አካባቢ በግም አልፈው ወላት አገር እምብርት በመግባታቸው ይሆናል።

ይህ የደግሞዊ ኢያሱ መሸነፍ በኢትዮጵያ ይዘታ ላይ ምን ያህል ጉዳት እንደሰከተለ አይታወቅም። የፋንጅ መንግሥትም በየምክንያቱ በግም በመደከም ላይ ነበርና ጉዳቱ ብዙ የነበር አይመስልም። ስለዚህ አካባቢ ቀጥለን በዝርዝር የምናነበው በጆምስ ብሩስ መጽሐፍ ውስጥ ነው። ዋና ከተማው ገዳሪፍ ወይም ቴዋዋ ያደረገው የአትባራ ባላባት በ1771 ትላልቅ የደንጎላ ፈረሶች ለኢትዮጵያ ንጉሥ በግብር መልክ ይሰጥ እንደነበር ብሩስ ይገልጻል። ከገለባትና ከመተማ ደግሞ በዓመት እራት መቶ ወቂት ወርቅ ከቀረጥ ይገኝ እንደነበር ያሳያል።(13) ሆኖም

ብሩስ በጦርነቱ ምክንያት የገለበትና የመተግ ንግድ እንደተደከመና የንጉሡ ቀረጥ ሰብሳቢ መቀመጫውን ወደሰሜን ምስራቅ አቅጣጫ ወደነበረችው ወደ ጨርቂን እንደዘወረ ይናገራል። ለዚህ ይህን ብሩስ የገለበትና አካባቢዋ አስተዳዳሪ ሆኖ የተሸመው? ሹመቱን ያሰጡት እቲጌ ምንትዋብና ልጃቸው ወይዘሮ አስቲር ሲሆኑ ወደገሩ ለመመለስ መወሰኑን እያወቁ ገዛቱን ለምን እንደሰጡት አይታወቅም። እንደይሄድባቸው ብለው ሊሆን ይችላል። የተደከመው ይዘታቸውን እንደያጠናክረዋቸው ተስፋ አድርገውም ይሆናል። ያም ሆነ ይህ ቋራ የምንትዋብ አገርና ገዛታቸው እንደነበረች መታወስ አለበት።

ከብሩስ በኋላ በዚህ በምዕራባዊ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍል የነበሩን ምንጮች ይደርቃሉ። ኢትዮጵያ በዘመነ መሰፍንት በጦረኞች እናርኪ በመዘፈንዋ የፋንጅ መንግሥት በተመሰሰላ ሁኔታ ላይ በመውደቁ እንደ በሌለው ድክመት ለመጠቀም አልቻለም። አምባ ገነንነት የጠማቸው ራስ ሚካኤል ስሐል ከንጉሣዊ ቤተሰብ እየመረጡ በማንገሥና በመገደል አገሪቷን ሕዝቧን ግራ ሲያጋቡ በዚህ ዘመን የዘበነው የመሐመድ ካይላክ ቤተ ሰብም እንጋሺና ሻሪ በመሆን ፋንጅን አደክመው ለገብጽ ወረራ አዘጋጇት።(14) ገብጽ ለፋንጅም ለኢትዮጵያም የጋራ ጠላት ስትሆን ሁለቱም ጎረቤት አገሮች ቅንጣት የጋለፈነት ስሜት በልነበራቸው ጦረኞች እጅ በመውደቃቸው መተባበር ተሰናቸው።

የገብጽ ወታደሮች ፋንጅን በ1821 እንደያዙ ወዲያውኑ፤ መሐመድ አሊ እንደቀደው፤ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ በይገፋም የወሰን ኑዋሪዎችን እየዘረፉ፤ ነጋዴውን እያንገለቱና ገባ ብለውም እስላም ያልሆኑትን በመፈንገልና በመሸጥ የተስተካከለ ኑሮ ኑረዋል። ጉግሳና ማሩ ከሞቱ በኋላ ግን መደበኛ የአገር ንጥቂያ ጀመሩ። የገብጽ ወታደሮች አዛዥና የስናር ገዢ በሆነው አሊ ኩርሺድ ፓሽ በ1829 እና 1830 የኢትዮጵያ ክፍሎች የሆኑትን አልአጢሽ፤ ገለበት፤ ቀደቢና አያቲን ወሰደ።(15) ይህ ሁሉ ሲሆን ራስ ማርዬ ምንም እንቅስቃሴ አላሰደም። በዚህ ጊዜ ደጃች ከንፋ የራስ ማርዬ በለሟል ሲሆኑ ሀሳባቸው ያተኮረው ማርዬን ከውቤ ጋር አጣልተው የአያታቸው የማሩን ደም ለመበቀልና ምናልባትም ከውቤ አገር ጥቂቱን ለመውሰድ ነበር። የሰሜኑ ደጃች ውቤ ከማሩ ለመራቅ ብለው ወልቃይት መቀመጥ ሲያዘወትሩ፤ ወይ በቀጥታ ራሳቸው በመዝመት ወይም በዚህ አካባቢ ተሸሽጎ በሚኖረው በሜክ ኒምር በመጠቀም በነዋሪው ላይ በመደጋገም የደረሰውን የገብጽ

ወታደሮች ዝርፈያ ለመመስከት አልሞከሩም። ከባሆችና ከሌሎች የአፋር ጎሳዎች ጭፍሮች በመመልመል ደጋው የክርስቲያን እገር በመዝረፍና በማንበርከክ የነበሩት ደጃች ሰበጋደሰም የግብጽ ወታደሮች የታከፍ ሰብደራት እካባቢዎችን እየደጋገሙ ሲወሩ ምንም አልተሰማቸውም። (16) ኩርሺድ ፓሽ እነዚህን በታዎች ለመወረሽ ጊዜ መትቶ በግብጽ እጅ ለማስገባት መንቀሳቀስ ሲጀምር ትግራይ አልበቃ ያላቸው ሰበጋደሰ የአማኞቹው የደዳች ውቤ እገር ስሜንን ለማጋየት ዘመቱ።

ከንፉ ፈታቸውን ወደቋራ ለመመለስና ጉራደያቸውን ደግሞ በግብጽ ላይ ለመሰንዘር ያደረጋቸው የማርዬና የውቤ መታረቅና መወደጃት ይመስላል። ማርዬና ውቤ ምንም ያህል በመጀመሪያ በይጣጣሙም የሰበጋደሰ የግዛት ሆደምነት እጋር እንደሆኑ አስገደዳቸው። በ1831 በደብረ አባይ ሦርነት ማርዬና ሰበጋደሰ ሲሞቱ የማርዬ ወራሽ ትግራይን ለውቤ መረቁላቸው። ከዚህ ጊዜ በኋላ በውቤ ላይ ማሴር ለከንፉ የማያዋጣ ሆነና የያዙትን፣ በተለይም ያበታቸው እገር ቋራን፣ ለመጠበቅ የወሰኑ ይመስላል።

ከንፉም ቢሆን የጥንት የቋራ ክፍሎች በመወሰዳቸው ተቀርቀረውና ለማስመለስ ብለው በራሳቸው ተነሳስተው ሳይሆን ራጃቸው ወደ በሺር አልጉል በተባለ የአልአጢሽ ሺክና በሰበጋት እንደተቀሰቀሱ አንድ በዚህ ጊዜ የተጻፈ የሱዳን ታሪክ ያሳያል። (17) የአልአጢሽ ገዢ በሰበጋቶች ከቋራ በሰበጋቶች ጋር የረጅም ጊዜ ወደጅነት ነበራቸውና ራጃቸው በ1836 ገደማ ደጃች ከንፉን መጥቶ ግዛታቸውን እንዲያስመልሱ እሱንም ከጭቶና እንዲያወጡት ጠየቃቸው። ጸሐፊው እንደሚለው ከንፉ ብዙ ሺ የሚቆጠሩ ጭፍሮች አስከትለው አልአጢሽ ወረዳ ገቡ። ግን የሱዳን ገዢ የነበረው ኩርሺድ ፓሽ ከአልአጢሽ አጠገብ ፋዙግሊ ወረዳ ውስጥ ነበርና የከንፉ መምጣትን እንደሰማ ከፍ ያለ ሞር በመላክ የከንፉ ሞር በጣም ተጉድቶና ተሸንፎ ወደመጣበት እንደመለሰ አደረገ። የከንፉ ሞር የተሸነፈው በሰው ኃይል ወይም በመሣሪያ ጥራት ማነስ ወይ ደግሞ በሰልት ጉድለት እንደሆነ አልተገለጸም። ከንፉን ያሸነፈ የሞር መሪ አሐመድ ከሺፍ የሚባል የገዳሪፍ አውራጃ ገዢ ሲሆን በገኘው ድል ተጠቅሞ ወደቋራ ጠልቶ በመገባት ብዙ መንደሮችን አቃጥሎ አያሌ ክርስቲያኖችን፣ ቀሳውስት ሳይቀሩ፣ ፈንግሎ ወደ ሱዳን ተመለሰ።

እሕመድ ከሺፍ ምንም ተቃውሞ ሳያገኘው የተሰከ ወረራ እካሒዶ በመመለሱ የግብጽ ባለ ሥልጣኖች ተበረታቱ። ሌላ ከፍ ያለ ሞር እስናድተው መተማን ያዜና በዙሪያዋ ከሚኖሩት ሁሉ ገብር መስብሰብ ጀመሩ። የዚህ ወረ ጄራና ጉንደር ሲሰማ ትልቅ መረበሽን አስከተለ። የዘመኑ የጉንደር ዜና መዋዕል የሕዝቡን ጭንቅ እንዲህ ሲል ይገልጻል። የዜና መዋዕሉ ደራሲ ስለ ክንፉ የነበረው እስተየያት ጠለቅ ያለ በመሆኑ ሰፋ ብሎ ቢጠቀስ እጠቃላይ ሁኔታውን ያሳያል።

ራስ እሊ ደጃእዝማች ግሩ በተሸመበቸው እገሮች ላይ ደጃእዝማች ክንፉን ከሸመ በኋላ እገሮቹን በሰላም ከወንበደዎችና ከገፈኞች ጠበቀ። ቀማኞችንና ሌሎችን እጆቻቸውን ይቆርጥ ነበር። የሚያስተዳድራት እገር ከወታደሮች ግርግር እረፈች። ባለጸጉችና ድሆች በእስተዳደሩ ተደሰቱ። በእሱ ዘመን ጥጋብ ሆነ፤ ረጋብም ጠፋ። በዘመኑ ቱርክ እንደወጣና በመተማ ከትሞ እንደተቀመጠ ተሰማ። እገር ሁሉ ሲሰማ ደነገጠ፤ እዘነ። ሁሉም ከብዙ እንባ ጋር ምህላ አደረጉ። ደጃእዝማች ክንፉም አለ፤ አትፍሩ፤ አትደንግጡ እኔ ከልሞትኩ በስተቀር እናንተ አትሞቱም። ይህ ካለ በኋላ ተነሳ፤ በመተማ ከሚኖሩት የእረብ ተወላጆች ገብር ለመስብሰብ የመጡትን የቱርክ ሰዎች ይወጋቸው ዘንድ ወደመተማም ሔደ።(18)

ይህ ዜና መዋዕል የግብጽ ወታደሮች ቱርክ እራት መቶ ነበር ይበል እንጂ ከላይ የተወሰነው የሱዳን ታሪክ የእሕመድ ከሺፍ ወታደሮች ከ1500 በላይ እንደነበሩ ያሳያል። ከነዚህ ከግግሽ የሚበልጡት ፈረሰኞች ሲሆኑ በበላይ እዛዥ በሰላም እረጋገጥ የሚመሩ በርካታ ወታደሮች እንደተጨመሩላቸውም ታሪኩ ይዘረዝራል። ሞርነቱ

ሰለተከሐደበት በታ ፲፯ ምንጮቻችን እይስማማለሁ። ይህ የሱዳን ታሪክ የጦር ጫዳውን ለይቶ በሰሙ በይጠራውም ውጊያው ከወሰኑ ገባ ብሎ በኢትዮጵያ መሪነት ላይ መከራከሉን ይናገራል። ሌላ የሱዳን ታሪክ ደግሞ ጦርነቱ አልራሺድ ከተማ አጠገብ ወደ ካልታቡ በተባለ በታ መደረጉን ያሳያል። (19) አልራሺድ ከገደሪፍ በቀጥታ በስተደቡብ 77 ኪሎሜትር ያህል ራት ብለ ትገኛለች። ጦርነቱ በወደ ካልታቡ መከራከሉ የጉንደር ዜና መዋዕል ደራሲ ጠፍተት እይመስለኛል። ምናልባት ወደ ካልታቡ በራስ አልፈለፍ በመተማ ወረዳ ውስጥ በመገኘቷ በአጠቃላይ ጉንደር የሚለውን ስም አሁን እንደምንጠቀምበት እሱም የወረዳውን ስም መጥቀስ ይበቃል ብሎ ሳይሆን አይቀርም።

ከላይ እንደተገለጸው የኢትዮጵያ ወሰን አሁን ካለበት ወደምዕራብ ገባ እንደሚል የታወቀ ሲሆን ምናልባት ግብጾች የክንፉን አስከትተው መዝመት ሲሰሙ ከመተማ ከተማ ወደጋሳ ማፈገፈገ ጆምረው ኖሮ ይሆናል። ክንፉም ድል ለማድረግ የቻሉት የግብጽ ወታደሮች ወለል ካለ ሚዳ ቢያገኙዋቸው ነው እንጂ መተማ ውስጥ መሸገው ቢጠብቁዋቸው ኖሮ ዘመናዊ ጠበንጃቸውን ሊቋቋሙት አይችሉም ነበር።

ይህ የክንፉ ድል የሱዳን ገዢ ኩርሺድ ፓሽን ከፍተኛ ስጋት ላይ ማለው። ክንፉ በ1829 እና 1830 ከኢትዮጵያ የተወሰዱት ግዛቶች በማስመለስ ሳይወሰኑ ወደስናር የሚገቡ መስሎ ታዩው። በተለይም የግብጽ ጨቋኝና በዝባኝ አስተዳደር የሱዳንን ሕዝብ እንገፍገፍት ነበርና የክንፉ መዝለት ሱዳንን የሚያሰጣ ሁኔታ እንዳይፈጠር እሱና የግብጹ መሪ መሐመድ አሊ በጣም ፈሩ። በመሐመድ አሊ ፈቃድ ኩርሺድ ፓሽ ኢትዮጵያን ለመውረር የሚያስችለው ከፍተኛ ጦር ማዘጋጀት ጀመረ። ይህ ዝግጅት በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ በመታወቁ እስካሁን በጠብ እንጂ በሰላም ያልተፈለሰጉት ጦረኛ መስፍኖችን ለጊዜው አቀራረበ። በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ጥናት በማድረግና በሌላም ምክንያት ረዘም ላለ ጊዜ በተቀመጡት በደባዴ ወንድማማቾች ምክር ራስ አሊ ደጃች ውቤና ክንፉ በሰኔ 1838 ለእንግሊዝና ለፈረንሳይ መንግሥቶች ግብጽ በመደጋገም ያደረገችውን ወረራ በመግለጽ እርዳታ እንዲያደርጉላቸው ደብዳቤዎች ጻፉ። (20)

ግብጽ ኢትዮጵያን ለመውረር ከፍተኛ ዝግጅት በማድረግ በነበረችበት በ1837 የእንግሊዝ መንግሥት በበኩሉ በወረራው

እንደቀጥለበት ለመሐመድ አሊ ማስጠንቀቂያ አቅርቦለታል። (21) እንግሊዞች በኢትዮጵያ ላይ ሁለት ጊዜ፤ መጀመሪያ በ1820 አሁን ደግሞ በ1837፤ ለመሐመድ አሊ ማስጠንቀቂያ የሰጡት ለኢትዮጵያ ነፃነትና ሕልውና ተቀርቆረው ሳይሆን ቀይ በሕርን ለመቀጣጠር የሚያስችላቸው ዕቅድ በግውጣት ላይ ነበሩና ይህ እንደበላሽባቸው በማሰብ ነበር። ቁልፍ የሆነችው የኢደን ወደብን በመያዝና ከእስክንድርያ እስከ ሱዌዝ የባቡር ሐዲድ በመዘርጋት በእንግሊዝ እገር በሕንድና በአውስትራሊያ መካከል የነበረውን ረጅም መንገድ በጣም ለማሳጠር በተዘጋጀበት ጊዜ መሐመድ አሊ በሱደን ዞር ምጽዋንና ዘይባን ይዞ ከግንባራቸው እንዲደነቀርባቸው አልፈለጉም። ምዕራባዊ ኢትዮጵያ ላይ ግን እንደልቡ ሲፈነጭ ጉዳያቸው አልነበረም።

አሊ፤ ውቤና ክንፉ ከቤተ ክህነት አለቆች ጋር እነዚያን ደብዳቤዎች ይላኩ እንጂ ለመተባበርና ኢትዮጵያን ከወረራ ለማደን ከልብ አልወሰኑም። መልምለው የሚቀልቡዋቸው ወታደሮችና ባሪያ፤ የዝሆን ጥርስና ሌላም ነገር በመላክ ያስመጡዋቸው ሰባራ ድቅድቅ ጠበንጃዎች ለግዛት ማስፋፈያ ታስበው ነበርና ምናልባት ከክንፉ በስተቀር ሌሎች ወሰን በመጠበቅ ለማባከን ሐሳብ አልነበራቸውም። እንዲህም ባይሆን ኖሮ የእንግሊዝና የፈረንሣይ የዲፕሎማቲክ ድጋፍ ወይም ወታደራዊ እርዳታ አያስፈልጋቸውም ነበር። ግብጽ በ1820/21 ፉንጅን ከወረረችበት ጊዜ ጀምሮ የነዚህንና ሌሎች ጦረኛ መሳፍንት እርዳታ ያልጠየቁ የፉንጅ ባላባት ሹማምንት አልነበሩም። ደጃች ውቤ ሚክ ኒምርን የሚያክል የፉንጅ እርበኛ በግዛታቸው አስቀምጠው ሳለ አልረዱትም፤ አልተጠቀሙበትም። እሳቸውን ተግጽኖ ወልቃይት በመቀመጥ በመደጋገም በመዝለቅ ግብጾች ላይ አደጋ ሲጥል አልረዱትም። (22) እውነት ሳይሆን ይችላል እንጂ ክንፉም አልአጢሽ ላይ ተሸንፈው እንደተመለሱ እንደ ተከታያቸው ከግብጾች ገንዘብ በመቀበል ራጃቸውን አሳልፎ ሰጥተዋል ተብሏል። (23) የግብጽ ወረራን ለመቋቋም የራስ አሊ ሠራዊት በበቃ ነበር። ግን እንደነገሩ፤ ብሩ ጎሹና ውቤ የመሰሉ ተወዳዳሪዎች እያሉዋቸው ወሰን ለማስጠበቅ ሲሉ ከሰዋቸው ሆነ ከአረራቸው ግጉደል እንደሞኝነት ይታያቸው ኖሮ ይሆናል። ያም ሆነ ይህ ጎሹና ብሩ፤ እንዲሁም አሊና ውቤ ዋናው የገቢ ምንጫቸው ከግብጽ ጋር ከሚያደርጉት ንግድ ነበርና በቀጥታ በመውጋት ወይም በእጅ አዙር በማስጠቃት ግንኙነታቸውን ለማበላሸት ፈርተውም ይሆናል።

ከንፋ ከተፎካካሪዎቻቸው ጋር ለቋራ በሚረዱበትና ከግብጾችም ጋር በወሰን በሚዋጉበት ጊዜ ታናሽ ወንድማቸው ከሰ እልተለዩዋቸውም። ከሰ ደገና አድርገው አረብኛ መናገር የቻሉትም እብዛኛውን ጊዜያቸው በጭልጋና በመተማ አካባቢ በማሰላፋቸው ይመስላል። ከኋላ ታሪካቸው እንደሚታየው ስለጭልጋና መተማ ገበያዎችና በነሱም ስለሚተላለፉ ነጋዴዎች ደገና አድርገው ከግወቃቸውም በላይ በወሰኑ አካባቢ ከሚኖሩት የተኩሪርና ገንጃር ባላባቶችም ጥሩ ትውውቅና እግባብ ነበራቸው።

በ1839 ከንፋ ሲሞቱ ራስ እሊ የቋራን ግዛት ለእናታቸው ለወይዘሮ መነን ሰጡ። የከንፋ ቤተሰብ ወንድሞቻቸውና ዘመዶቻቸው ደተደደሩባቸው የነበሩት ጉልቶች መነን ወስደው ለምስለ ኔዎቻቸውና ለሽከርቻቸው አካረሉ። እነዚያ የሚበሉትን ሰለጡ ከወንዶቹ ግማሹቹ ልሊቶች ጦረኞች ባለሟል ሲሆኑ እንደንዶቹ ደግሞ በሽፍትነት ተሰግሩ። ከሰ ለተለያዩ ሰዎች ጋሽ ዣግራ ለመሆን ሞክረዋል። ግን የተሟላ ሰውነትና ጤንነት የነበራቸውና ወደ ሃያ አመት የተጠጉ ጉረምሳ በመሆናቸው በጉብዝናቸውና በግዳያቸው ብዛት ስለቀኑባቸው ከሰም እንደሽከር ተለግም ማደር እጅ ስላላቸው ከሽፍቶች ጋር ተቀላቅለው እየዘረፉ መኖርን መረጡ። በቀየው የኢትዮጵያ ፊውደላዊ ባህል ሽፍታ ሆኖ ደር የሚገባ ሌብነትና ቅሚያ ያማረው አልነበረም። ሽፍትነት የጨዋ ልጅ ማኩረፊያ ስለነበር ጫካ የሚገባው እብዛኛውን ጊዜ የሚፈልገውን ወይም የሚገባውን ሹመትና ጉልት አለማግኘቱን የሚገልጽበት ዘዴ ነበር። ዕድሜውና ሰውነቱ ለመሸፈት ያልፈቀደለት የጨዋ ልጅ ደግሞ ከመለመንና ከመመን ኩስ ሌላ እማራጭ አልነበረውም።

በዚህ ባህል መሠረት ልሽፍት ብሎ የሚነሳ የጨዋ ልጅ የሚደብቁትና የሚያበሉት ዘመዶች ሲኖሩት ሲሆን የሚሸፍተው እሱ በተወለደበትና እነሱ በሚኖሩበት፣ በተወለደበትና በደገበት አገር ነበር። ከሰና ተዋበች ከተጋቡ በኋላ ሚስትየዋ ባላቸው እንደሸፍቱ ሲፈልጉ፤ «አገር የለህምን፤ ታጠቅ እንሂድ» ነበር ያሏቸው። ከሰም፤ «ምነው የለኝ» ብለው ነበር ተያይዘው ቋራ የገቡት። ከሰ ከዚህ በፊትና ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ቋራ ገብተው ሲሸፍቱ የምኞታቸው ግራ ከቋራ ገዢነት አላለፈም። የከንፋ ልጆች፣ መኩንን፣ ይልማና ጋረድም ከዚህ የተለየ ፍላጎት አልነበራቸውምና ከሰ ከዘመዶቻቸው የተሻለ እድል

እንደሚኖራቸው ያወቁት ሽፍትነታቸው እያግረላቸው ቢሔድ ነበር። ሽፍትነቱ እግረላቸው ስንል ትርጉሙ ሰፊ ነው። በሚሸሉ ኩለኩባቸው አካባቢዎች የሚኖሩ ገባሮች ብዙም ሳይከፉ አበሏቸው፤ እጠጡዋቸው፤ ደበቁዋቸው። የጠላቶቻቸው ገባሮች ግን ብዙ ጊዜ ተዘርፈዋል፤ ቤት ንብረታቸው ተቃጥሏል። ለመከላከል የዋከሩም ተገድለዋል፤ ሚስቶቻቸውና ልጆቻቸው ቤታቸውን ጥለው ጫካ ውስጥ እንዲደበቁ ተገደዋል። ነጋዴውም በገላው ላይ የለበሰው ሳይቀር ተዘርፏል። ቀርፍ ፀሐይ፤ ጉርፍና የውሃ ጥም፤ ረሃብና የቀለ ንደድ እየተፈራረቁ እያጠቁት፤ አተርፋለሁ ብሎ ያጠራቀማትን ሀብቱን ከመቅጽበት ያጣታል። ንብረቱን ልከላከል ብሎ ከከጃለም ሽፍቶች መሸገው ከሸመቀበት በኩል በተተኩሰ ጥይት ይደፋል፤ ያውራ ራት ይሆናል። ሹመት አነሰኝ፤ ጉልቱን ተቀማሁ ብሎ ለሸፈተው የዉዋ ልጅ ግን ይህ የማኩረፈያ ዘዴ ዝናን ያተርፍለታል፤ ጉበዝ ያለገዋል፤ ከረዳዎች ጉር ወሸባዩ እያሉ ይዘፍኑለታል። ወደ በለጠ ሹመትም ያሸጋግረዋል። የኢትዮጵያ መሪዎችን ሁሉ፤ አሁን ሰማቸው በየታሪክ መጽሐፉ ጉልቶ የሚነሳው ሰዎች ሁሉ፤ ገናናነታቸውን ያገኙት በመንገዳቸው የወገኖቻቸውን ራሳ እያነጠፉና እየረገጡ ነበር።

ከሰም ሽፍትነታቸው እያግረላቸው ቢሔድም፤ ከገበሬው ከዘላኑና ከነጋዴው እየዘረፉ የግብላት ችሎታቸው ከፍ በግለቱ የተከተያዮቻቸው ቁጥር ከቀን ወደ ቀን ቢዉምርም፤ እንደዘመኑ የዉዋ ልጅ ሽፍቶች ዉከኝ አልነበሩም። የገበሬው ጉተራ ቢያራቁትም፤ ቶላ ወርደው በሪያ ፈንገለው ቢሸጡም፤ ምንም ሳይተውሰቸው ነጋዴዎችን ቢዘርፉም የዘመኑ ጭካኔና አረመኔነት አልታየባቸውም። ሆኖም የዘመኑ ፍጥረትና ውጤት እንደመሆናቸው የተጣሉዋቸውን ከመገደልና ከመሰለብ ይሸላል ብለው ቋንጂንና እጅን በመቁረጥ፤ እንደ እንደ ወይም ሁለት ሁለት ጀር በመመነደብ ይሸኙ ነበር። በተቀዉዎቹ በኩል ይህ እንደምሕረት ይታይ እንደነበር ከነገሩ በኋላ ጸሐፊ ትእዛዝቸው የነበሩትና ከዜና መዋዕሎቻቸው እንደገና የደረሱ አለቃ ዘነብ ያሳያሉ። የከሰ ወንድም ከንፋ የወጋቸውንና የማረኩትን ሁሉ ይገድሉ እንደነበረ ከጠቀሱ በኋላ ከሰ እንደ እንደ ጀርአቸው ብቻ እንደመነደብ ያዘሉ። እንደ ያለቀለት የመሰለው ምርኮኛ ከእፋይታው ብዛት፤ «ሁለት ሁለት ጀርአችን ይሁን ከሞት እንደን እንደ አለ። ስለ ፍራት የሰይፋን ሞት አይቷልና።» (24)

መገደልና መቀረጥ ከሥልጣን ፍለጎት ጋር እንደተያያዘ ራሳቸው
 ይናገራሉ። አሁንም አለቃ ዘነብ ሌላ ጊዜ ስለተደረገ ቅጣት
 እንደህ ይላሉ። እንደ ይልማ ወሰን የሚበል ምስሌ ኔዎች በደረሱበት
 ጭቆና ተበሳጭቶ ጫካ የገባ፤ ካሳ ቋንጂ ሲያስቆርጡ እየና፤ «ልጅ
 ዘንግም ተቀጣቸው ወንድምህ ሂ ሰው አቃጠሉ። እንተ ደግሞ ሂ ሰው
 ቆረጥህ ብሎ አዘነ። ልጅ ካሳም እንደህ አሉ። እግዚአብሔር ቢሰጠኝ
 እገዛለሁ። ያለ እግዚአብሔር ፈቃድ ምን የሚሆን አለ አሉ።» (25)
 ገጭትነት ጊዜያቸው ካሳ አቅም በልነበራቸው ያደረሱዋቸውን ጥፋቶች
 የሚዘረዘሩልን የማይወዷቸው ሰዎች ብቻ ሳይሆኑ እኒሁ በጣም
 ቅርጸቸውና ዋና ጸሐፊያቸው የነበሩት አለቃ ዘነብም ናቸው። ዘነብ
 ያዘጋጀት ዜና መዋዕል የተመዘዘነና ቴዎድሮስን ከቅርብ ከማወቅ
 የተጻፈ በመሆኑ ስለሽፍትነታቸው በሥልጣን መመንጠቃቸውና ስለ
 እስተሰበሰቡት እድገት አስተማማኝ ምንጫችን ነው።

እንደ ቀን ሽፍታው ካሳ ሸምቀው ካደሩበት ቦታ እጠገብ እንበሳ
 ሲሆን ቢሰሙ፤ «በፍከራ መንፈስ ቅዱስ ትንቢት እናገራቸው። እኔ
 የጌርስቶስ በርያ ከሰፈራ ደግሞ የምመታው ጦር አለ ብለው ፈከሩ።
 ቅንብት መናገርም የጀመሩ ያነ ጊዜ ነው።» (26) ደብተራ ዘነብ እዚህ
 ቅንብት ያሉት ካሳ ስለራሳቸው ወደፊት የሚያደርጉትና
 የሚደርሱባቸውን በግውጠንጠን የሚናገሩት ሁሉ ይመስላል።
 ምናልባትም ካሳ ተራ የሸፍታ አለቃ ሆነው እንደማይቀሩና የቋራም ገዢ
 የሆኑን ዕድል እንደላ የታያቸው ከዚህ ጊዜ ጀምሮ ነበር ለማለት
 ይቻላል። የካሳ እስተሰበሰብ ገና በሽፍትነት ጊዜያቸው እየተለወጠ
 መጥጣቱን ለቋራ አራሾች ኑሮ መሸሸል አስበው ያደረጉት ጥሩ ምግባር
 ያዘገነዝባል። አሁንም ደብተራ ዘነብ ታሪኩን አሳጥረው
 ይገልጹታል፤ «ያነ ጊዜም ቋራ ሁሉ ጠፍ ሁኖ ነበር። ልጅ ካሳም
 ጸባላገሩ ሁሉ ብዙ ብር ሰጡት መቆፈሪያ ገዛ ብለው። ካሳም ደሩን
 ይጨርጉ ጀመሩ። ከወታደሩ ጋር። ብዙም ቀፍረው ዘሩ። ያገሩም ሰው
 ጭቃ ብዙ ቀፈረ ደሩን እየመታ። እገሩም ሁሉ ለም ሆነ።» (27)

የካሳ የወረራና የውጊያ ስልታቸው በጣም ጥሩ ሆኖ
 ለተከታታዮቻቸው ከሚበላና ከሚለበስ በላይ ገንዘብ፤ ፈረስና በሪያ
 የማስገኘቱ ከቀን ወደ ቀን የወደፊት ዕድላቸው እንደሚቀናሳቸው
 እየተግመኑ ሄደ። ከመጀመሪያውም በእግዚአብሔር እምነታቸው

ከፍተኛ ነበርና መንገደቸውን እግዚአብሔር ራሱ እንደጠረገላቸው እየመሰለቸው በሔደ ቁጥር ጠባቂቸው እየለሰለሰ፤ ልባቸውም እየራራ ቀጠለ። ከሃይማኖተኛነታቸውና እምነታቸው የፈለቁ፤ በዘመኑ ጦረኞች ግን ያልታወቁ ጠባቦች ነበሩዋቸው። ከሰ ገና ከጉልማሳነታቸው ጀምረው በሐቀኛነታቸው፤ ታማኝነታቸውና ደግነታቸው የታወቁ ነበሩና እነዚህ ጠባቦች በተወሰነ በተከታታይነት እንደወደደ አድርገዋል።

በዚህ ሁኔታ ወይዘሮ መነን በቋራ ላይ የሸሙዋቸውን ምስለኔዎች ወግተው አስወጥተው ከሰ ግዛቱን በቁጥጥራቸው ሥር አዋሉ። ግብር መሰብሰብ ያቃታቸው መነንም ከከሰ ጋር መታረቅ ገድህነባቸው። በ1846 በተደረገው ዕርቅ አሊ ልጃቸውን ድረው የደጃዝማችነት ማዕረግ ሲሰጡ መነን ደግሞ በቋራ ላይ ምስለኔያቸው አደረጉዋቸው። (28) ምንም እንኳን ከሰ ጭልጋና መተማ በመውረድ ከገበራውም ከነጋዴውም መነን እይተውት የማያውቁት ግብር አገበስብሰው ቢያመጡላቸውም ሁለቱም አልተጣጣሙም። መነን ከሰን ባለማመናቸው ጉንደር ተቀምጠው ቋራን እንዲያስተዳድሩላቸው ፈለጉ። ከሰ በበኩላቸው የሴት ሕይወት ምስለኔ በመሆናቸው አልተደሰቱም። ሆኖም ባመቱ እንደሸፍቱ ያደርጋቸው ነገር ጥርት ብሎ አልታወቀም። እንደ አለቃ ዘነብ አገላለጽ ከሆነ ጉልት ሳይሰጣቸው ጉንደር ውስጥ ከተከታታይነት ጋር ደጃ ጠኚ መስለው በመቀመጣቸው ይመስላል። «በሁለተኛው ዓመት ልጅ ከሰም እጅግ ተቸገሩ ሰዋቸውም ተራበ። እጅግ በደልና መዋረድ ንቀት በመጣባቸው ጊዜ» ይላሉ። (29)

ቴዎድሮስ በሞቱ በእስራ ሶስተኛው ዓመት ማለትም በ1881 በአለቃ ወልደማርያም የተጻፈ ሌላ ዜና መዋዕል ለከሰ እንደገና መሸፈት የታወቀውን የከሰውና የወርቅ ደር ማታውን ታሪክ እንደ ምክንያት ይሰጣሉ። (30) ወደ ያፄ ዮሐንስ ዘመነ መንግሥት መወረሻ ግን ሰማቸው በልታወቀ ደራሲ የተጻፈ ሶስተኛ የቴዎድሮስ ዜና መዋዕል የከሰውና የወርቅን ታሪክ ከሶስተኛው ሽፍትነታቸው ጋር ያያይዘዋል። ለሁለተኛው መሸፈታቸው ዜና መዋዕሉ የሚሰጣቸው ምክንያቶች ሁለት ናቸው፤ በጉንደር በዝነው መቀመጣቸውና ቋራ ለመሔድ ፈቃድ በጠየቁ ጊዜ ደግሞ ከበለያቸው ሌላ ምስለኔ በመነን መሸም። (31) ችግሩም ውርደቱም ከነዚህ ከሁለቱ ወይም ከጉንደር በመሆኑ ይመስላል ወይዘሮ ተዋበችም በእያታቸውና በእባታቸው ሥራ የተቀየሙትና ባላቸውን «ታጠቅ እንሂድ» ብለው የገፋፉ። በዚህ

ገጽ ፩፡፭ የሸፍትነት ጊዜያቸው ከሰ «ይህን የከሰ ሸጭ ልጅ» ብለው በቀኝዝማች ወንድይራድና፤ «ያ ቅለኛ የፍየል እረኛ» ብለው በተባለቀባቸው በመነን ላይ ያገኙቸው ድሎች ተደጋግመው ስለተነገሩ እዚህ ላይ የሚመርጧቸው የለም። ከባለቸው ከዚህ የሐንሰ ጋር የተግረኩትን መነን ለማስፈታት ሲሉ ራስ እሊ ያለ በላይ ያለ ቀራጭ «እኛርታ በመለስ ከደሞት በመለስ እርግጠህንም ሁሉ ቋራን እገባ» (32) ሰጥተው ለመታረቅ ተገደደ። ደምቢያን፤ እረፋንና ጣቁሳን የሚያወቃልለው የደርው ግሩ ቅምስ ለከሰ ሲሰጡ እናታቸውን ለማስፈታት ሌላ ዓላማ ሳይኖራቸው አልቀረም። የጉጃም ገዢ ደጃች ቆራ የደሞት ገዢ የሆኑት አባታቸውን ደጃች ጉሹ ዘውዴ እዚህ ቀምጥም ከማለታቸውም በላይ ራስ እሊን እየተደፈሩ እንደተገረዩባቸው ነበርና እንደረዱባቸው ፈልገው ይመስላል።

የከሰ በግሩ ቅምስ አገሮች መሸምን እንደሰሙ አባትና ልጅ ሙቀንኳ ኩስ ጀመሩ። ከሰ ግን ዓላማቸው በግዛት ንትርክ ለመዘፈን እዚህ እረኛና በዙም ሰይቶ ወደ መተማ ወረደ። ከሸፍትነታቸው ጊዜ ጀምሮ በምዕራባዊ ወሰን ከሚኖሩት ተኩሪሮችና ግንጃሮች ከጥንት የቀየሩት ወደጅነት ለማደስ ችለዋል። እነዚህን ለመርዳትና በግብጽ የተወሰደትን ወረዳዎች ለማስመለስ ይጠብቁት የነበረው በባታቸው እዚህ እስኪሸሙ ድረስ ብቻ ነበር። ለዚህም ነበር መተማን አልፈው ወደ ሩንጅ ሙሃል አገር ዘልቀው የገቡት። የሩንጅ ዋና ከተማ ሰናር በጥቁር እዚህ ላይ ስትሆን ደባርኪ ደግሞ ብዙም ሳትርቅ፤ በስተ ደቡብ ምሥራቅዋ፤ በደንደር ወንዝ ላይ የምትገኝ መጠነኛ ከተማ ነበረች። እዚህ ደባርኪ ድረስ የገሰገሱት ለኢትዮጵያ ቅርብ የነበረውን ትልቅ የግብጽ ጦር ሰፈር ለመምታት ፈልገው ይመስላል። ግን ዘመቻው እዚህ ባለቸው ቀረ። ርቀው ከመግባታቸውም በላይ መምጣታቸውም በመጣቱ ይመስላል፤ የግብጽ ጦር ከደህና ምሽግ ውስጥ ዘመናዊ መዘንጃዎችን ደግሞ ጠበቃቸው። የከሰ ጭፍሮች የመሪያቸውን ትእዛዝ እዚህ ብቻ ለገደይ የሚቸኩሉ ከመሆናቸውም በላይ አብዛኛዎቹ ከጦርና እዚህ ሌላ መሣሪያ በሰመያዘቸው ዘመቻው ከሸፈ። ፕሮፌሰር ሩቤንሰን እዚህ ሌላ ከደባርኪ መሸነፋቸው ከሰ ብዙ ተማሩ። አስተሳሰባቸውም በግም ተለወጠ። (33)

እስከ ደባርኪ ድረስ የከሰ ዓላማ ያበታቸውን አገር እዚህ፤ የተወሰደባቸውን አስመልሰው ወሰናቸውን እየጠበቁ በመተማ

በሚያልፈው ንግድ እየተጠቀሙ ለመኖር ነበር። ማለትም የምኞታቸው እድገት ከቋራ አላለፈም ነበር። አሁን የገብጾች ነገር የቋራ ወይም የሰቸው ብቻ ሳይሆን የመላ ኢትዮጵያ ጉዳይ እንደሆነ ተገነዘቡ። በኢትዮጵያና በግብጽ ወታደራዊ አቋሞች ልዩነት እንደነበር ተገንዝበው የኢትዮጵያን አቋም ለመለወጥ ወሰነው ከደባርኪ የተመለሱ ይመስላል። ከሰ እዲስ ሀሳብ ይዘው እንደተመለሱ በተደበሰበሰ ሁኔታ ሰማቸው በልታወቀው ጸሐፊ በተደረሰው ዜና መዋዕል ተገልጿል። እኒህ ታሪክ ጸሐፊ ከሰ የራስ አሊን መንግሥት ለመገልበጥ እስከሰው በዘዴም በገንዘብም የአሊን እሸከሮች ማባበል የጀመሩት ገና የመነን ምስለኔ በነበሩበት ጊዜ፤ ማለትም ለሁለተኛ ጊዜ ከመሸፈታቸው በፊት ያደርጉታል። (34) ስለዚህም ጸሐፊው ታሪካቸውን ያዘጋጅታል እንደገና ነገሮች ከተዘነጉ በኋላ ይመስላል። ለምሳሌ ራስ አሊ ለመወረሻ ጊዜ በከሰ ተሸንፈው ወደየጄ እንዲሸጉ የተገደደቱ አይሻል ሚዳ ሳይ በ29 ሰኔ 1853 ሲሆን ከሱ በፊት በገንቦት ደብረታበር ከተደረገው መጠነኛ ውጊያ ጋር አምታትተውታል። (35) ስለዚህ የራስ አሊን ሥልጣን መመኘትና ሰዎችን ማባበል የጀመሩት ከደባርኪ በኋላ መሆን አለበት።

ራስ አሊን የመገልበጥ ሀሳብ ከደባርኪ በኋላ ይምጣቸው እንጂ ዝግጅቱ እምስት ዓመት ወስደባቸዋል። እስከሁን ድረስ ተፎካካሪ ጠበኞች የነበሩት ጉሹ፤ ብሩ ጉሹና ውቤ ከአሊ ጋር ተባብረው ከሰን ለማጥፋት ብዙ ጥረት ቢያደርጉም የማይበገሩ ሆኑ። ጭፍሮቻቸውን በብዙ ጊዜ በሚያጥፉ ጦሮች ሳይ በመደጋገም በጉራምባ፤ በደብረ ታበርና በአይሻል ያገኙዋቸው ድሎች በራሳቸው እቅም ሳይሆን በእግዚአብሔር ፈቃድ መሆን አለበት በማለታቸው ለታላቅ ሥራና ጋላፊነት እንደመረጣቸው በሙሉ ልባቸው አመኑ። ከአይሻል ጦርነት በኋላ የከሰ ዓለማ ቀልጭ ብሎ መታየት ጀመረ። የፍካራ ኢየሱስ ትንቢት በሰቸው እንደሚፈጸም ለማመናቸው ከዚህ በኋላ ያቀደዋቸውና የፈጸሙዋቸው ድርጊቶቻቸው ይገልጻሉ።

ፍካራ ኢየሱስ የእንደት ትንሽ መጽሐፍ ርእስ ሲሆን ትርጉሙም የክርስቶስ ንግግር ወይም ትንቢት ማለት ነው። በመሠረቱ ይህች መጽሐፍ በማቴዎስ ወንጌል ክርስቶስ ስለ ገልቀተ ዓለምና ስለ ደግሞ ምጽአቱ በደብረዘይት ሁኖ ለደቀ መዛሙርቱ የተናገረውን ትንቢት በሌሎች የብሉይና የእዲስ ኪዳን ክፍሎች ከሚገኙት ተመሳሳይ ንግግሮች ጋር በማጣመር ታብራራለች። በተጨማሪም በዮሐንስ ራዕይ

ከምጽእተ ክርስቶስ በፊት ዲያቢሎስ ለእንድ ሺ ዓመት በዕመቅ ይታሰራል የሚለውን ንግር እንደንድ ጥንታውያን የሃይማኖት መምህራን ዓለም ከጦርነትና ከእለመግባባት ፋታ እግኝታ ሰው በሰለም ሠርቶ፤ በልቶ፤ ጠግቦ ይኖራል ብለው የሚሰጡትን ፍቺ ከዋናው ትንቢት ጋር በማጋጠም ይህ ሁኔታ በኢትዮጵያ እንዴት እንደሚፈጸም ታስታለች። በክርስትና ሃይማኖት ይህ ራዕይ በጣም አከራካሪ ቢሆንም መጽሐፍዋ ከኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ጋር የሚያያዝና ተቀባይነት ሊኖረው የሚችል ፍቺ ትሰጠዋለች።

መጽሐፍዋ መቼ እንደተጻፈች አይታወቅም፤ ምናልባት ከግራኝ ወረራ በፊት ወይ ጎሳ ይሆናል። በአሰራ ሰድሰተኛው ክፍለዘመን ክርስቲያኖች በእስላሞችና በባህላዊ ሃይማኖት ተከታዮች እጅ ከፍተኛ ሽንፈትና ጉዳት ስለደረሰባቸው መጽሐፍዋ ይህን ክርስቶስ በደብረ ዘይት ሐሳዊ መሲሆኝ ለበሽታ፤ ለረሃብ ለሰደትና ለሞት ይደርጉዋቸዋል ባለው ጋር ታዘምድና በዲያብሎስ መታሰር የሚገኘውን ፋታ ደግሞ ቴዎድሮስ የሚባል ንጉሥ በኢትዮጵያ ላይ የሰለም ዘመንን ያመጣል ከሚለው ባህላዊ ንግር ጋር ታያይዛለች። ሕዝቦችና አገር በማይረቡ ሰዎች ከጠፉ በጎሳ እግዚአብሔር እንዲህ ይላል፤

ከምሥራቅ በኩል ቴዎድሮስ የሚባል ንጉሥ አስነሳለሁ እሱም ፈቃዱን የፈጸመውን ከመከራ ያተረፍኩዋቸውን የሚሰበሰብ ነው። ጳጳሱም ይወጣል ምድርን የሚበርክ ሰውን ደስ የሚያሰኝ። አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ይታደሳሉ። በዚያ ዘመን መቅሰፍት የለም።... በዚያን ዘመን ጥል፣ክርክር፣ ሐሰት ነገር የለም፤ ሁሉም በንጉሥ ቃል ይጸናል፤ ምድርም በጳጳስ ቃል ትባረካለች፤ ስሜም ይከበራል። ፍቅር፣ በረከት፣ በምድር ላይ እንደ እህል ይዘራል።... ፍቅር ሰላምና ደስታ እንጂ ፀብ ክርክር የለም።(36)

በደብረ ዘይቱ የክርስቶስ ትንቢት ላይ የተጨመረው ይህ ንግር ለክርስቲያንና ለፈላጊ እትዮጵያውያን በየዘመኑ፤ ከእስራ ስድስተኛው ክፍለ ዘመን ጀምሮ፤ የተስፋ ምንጭ ሆኖ ቶይቷል። ከዚህ ዘመን ጀምሮ ጦርነት፤ ረሀብና በሽታ ከእትዮጵያውያን ኑሮ በለመራቃቸው የዚህ በፍካራ ኢየሱስ የተተነበየለት የቴዎድሮስ መምጣት ሁልጊዜ በመጠበቃቸው በየዘመኑ ብዙ ቴዎድሮስ ነን የሚሉ ብቅ ብለዋል። ጥቂቶቹ ነገሥታት ሲሆኑ ይበልጥ ተቀባይነትን እግኝተው መንግሥታቸውን ለማጠናከር ፈልገው ነበር። ይበልጡኑ ግን ወይ በፍላጎታቸው ወይ በሌሎች ተገፋፍተው ለረጅም ይሁን ለጭር ጊዜ በሥልጣን ቁጥጥ ለማለት እስበው ነበር። ግን ከኋለኞቹ መካከል ከካሳ በስተቀር በዙፋን ለመቀመጥ የቻለ አልነበረም። የተቀሩት በየዘመናቸው በነበሩት ነገሥታት እንደሸፍቶች በመታየታቸውና በየዜና መዋዕሎቹ በመወገዛቸው የተነሱባቸው ምክንያቶች ጥርት ባለ አኳኋን ለማወቅ ያስቸግራል።

እንደ ወልደቅብርያል የሚባል ሰው ልክ ፍካራ ኢየሱስ እንደሚለው ቴዎድሮስ ፀሐይ (ከበስተምሥራቅ የመጣው ቴዎድሮስ) ብሎ ራሱን ሠይሞ ከ1619 እስከ 1621 ድረስ በሸዋና በደቡብ ወሎ ሸፍቶ ንጉሡን እፄ ሱስንዮስን ከከፍተኛ ስጋት ላይ ጥሏቸዋል። የተነሳበት ዋና ዓላማው የተዋሕዶ እምነትንና የእትዮጵያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን በካቶሊክ እምነትና በሚሊዮናውያን አስተዳደር ከመሸርና ከመገልበጥ ለማዳን ሲሆን እግረ መንገዱን ሸዋ የመንግሥት ግእዝል መሆንዋ ከቀረ ወዲህ በነዋሪዎች መካከል የተፈጠሩትን ችግሮች ለማቃለል እስብ ነበር። በተለይ ከግራኝ ወረራ ጀምሮ በሸዋና በወሎ ውስጥ ሃይማኖታቸው የተለያዩ እማርኛ፤ እርምኛ፤ እርጎብኛና አፋርኛ ተናጋሪዎች ተጨናንቀውና ተጣበው ይኖሩ ነበርና በመካከላቸው የተፈጠሩ የኢኮኖሚና የባህል ቅራኔዎችን ለመቀነስ፤ ከተቻለም ለማስታረቅ ሞክሯል። ከሱስንዮስ በኋላ የነገሡት ፋሲለደስ፤ ቀዳማዊ ኢየሱስና በካፋ ጠንካራ መሪዎች በመሆናቸውና ለነበሩት የኢኮኖሚና የፖለቲካ ችግሮች መፍትሔ ለመስጠት በመሞከራቸውና በመጠኑም ስለተሳካላቸው በጊዜያቸው ቴዎድሮስ ነኝ ባይ ሽፍታ ያስቸግራቸው አይመስልም።

የዘመነ መሰፍንት የሥልጣን ሽሚያዎች ያስከተሉዋቸው እልቂት፤ ርዕሰና በሽታ እየጸኑ ሲሔዱ ግን በተለያዩ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍሎች ቴዎድሮስና መሲሐዊ መሪዎች ለመሆናቸው ለማሳመን ተነስተዋል።

፩፡፩፻፲፱ ጊዜ በ1779 ነገሠው አምስት ጊዜ ከዙፋን ወርደው ፩፡፱፻፲፱ ተስፋ በመቁረጥ በ1800 በፈቃደቸው አክሱም ገደም ተጠገተው የሞቱት ቀዳማዊ ተክለጊዮርጊስ ማእከላዊ መንግሥት ሽሚያዳክሙ ዘበናዮች ጋር ለተያያዙት ትንንቅ የሕዝብ ድጋፍ የሚያስገኝላቸው መስሏቸው የሚጠበቀው ቴዎድሮስ ለመሆናቸው ለማሳመን ሞክረዋል። ብቻስ አልሆነላቸውም። እንደያውም በዘመናቸው እንደነ ትልቁ ራስ አሊ፤ ራስ ወልደሥላሴ፤ ራስ ገብረና ጌቶችም አምባገነን ጦረኞችና መጤ መሰፍንት አገሪቷን ለማስጨነቃቸውና ሥርዓት አልበኝነትን በማስፋፋታቸው ንጉሠ ቴዎድሮስ ለመበል ሳይበቁ ፈጻሚ መንግሥት የሚል ቅጽል ተቆጥቀው። (37)

ለሰላሳ ሦስት ዓመታት ያህል ሸዋን የገዙ አስፋወሰንም የፍክሪ ኢየሱስ ቴዎድሮስ ሆነው በመላ ኢትዮጵያ ለመንግሥት አስበዋል፤ ግን በሸዋ አልፈው ኢትዮጵያን ምን እንደሰመኛቸው የሚታወቅ የለም። የገጠሙዋቸውን ችግሮችና ሁኔታዎች በመመልከት ምክንያቶቻቸውን ፩፡፲፱፻፲፱ እንችል ይሆናል። በሸዋ የውስጥ ታሪክ አስፋወሰን የሚታወቁት በየበላበታቸው የሚተዳደሩትን የተለያዩ የሸዋ ወረዳዎችን እንዲያስበው ክፍለ ሀገሩን ቅጥ በለው ማእከላዊ አመራር ማስተዳደር ፩፡፩፻፲፱ ጊዜ ነው። ስለዚህም በሸዋ የውስጥ ታሪክ ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ንጉሥ በመበል ተጠሩ። በዚህ ጊዜ በመጤ መሰፍንት ፍደቸውን ለማየት የነበሩት ተክለጊዮርጊስ ሸዋን ከሥራቸው አድርገው፤ ከሸዋ የሚለበሰሱት ግብርና ወታደር ያስቸገሩዋቸውን ዘበናዮች ለመቋቋም እንደገና፤ አልተሰካላቸውም እንጂ ወደሸዋ ዘምተው ነበር። ይህን ያዩና በገጠሙዋቸው ስለ ጉንደር መንግሥት መደከም ያዘኑት አስፋወሰን በገጠሙዋቸው በንጉሠ ነገሥቱ ዙፋን ላይ ተቀምጠው ለመላ አገሪቱ ለሚለበሰሱት አስበው ይሆናል። ይህን ግምት የሚያጠናክሩ ሁለት የታሪክ ሁኔታዎች አሉ። አንዱ አስፋወሰን በሸዋ የሶስት ልደትና የጸጋ ፊጅ እምነቶች አጋዥና ደጋፊ ስለነበሩ በጉንደር ለነበሩት የነዚህ እምነት ተከታዮች ርዳታቸውን ለመዘርጋት ሳይፈልጉ አለመቅረታቸው ነው። ሁለተኛው አስፋወሰን ሸዋን የጥንት ሰፋቷንና ትልቅነቷን ለማስያዝ ካደረጉዋቸው ጥረቶች ጋር የተያያዘ ይሆናል። የሸዋን ወሰን

እስከ እዋሽ ወንዝ ድረስ በሚገፋበት ጊዜ አብረውም ኢትዮጵያ ከግራኝ ወረራ በፊት የነበራትን ስፋት ለማስያዝ አልመው ይሆናል። እስፋወስን ጠንከራ የሸዋ ገዢ ይሁኑ እንጂ የንጉሠ ነገሥቱን በታ ለመያዝ ብለው እንድም ገንዘብ ወይም የሰው ሕይወት አላባከኑም።

የዘመነ መሰፍንት ሥርዓት አልበኝነት እየተበባሰ በመሔድና ጠንካራ ይሆናል ተብሎ ተሰፋ የተጣለበት የተክለጊዮርጊስ መንግሥት መፍረከረክ ክርስቲያኑን የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ የፍክራ ኢየሱስ ትንቢት የሚፈጸምበትን ጊዜ ይበልጥ እንዲጠበቅ አደረገው። መሲሐዊው ንጉሥ የሚመጣበትና ትንቢቱ የሚፈጸምበትን ጊዜ ለማወቅ ቀሰውስቱንና መነኩሳቱን ወተወተ። ይህ ጥያቄ እንገብጋቢ የዕለት ጥያቄ ቢሆንም ተመዝግቦ የምናገኘው በተወሰኑ የውጭ እገር ጉብኝዎች ጽሑፎች ውስጥ ነው። ጉንደርን ከ1830 እስከ 1832 የጉብኝ የእንግሊዝ የሚሲዮናዊ ድርጅት መልእክተኛ ሰሙኤል ጎባት ሰይቀር ስለ ቴዎድሮስ መምጣት የሚያውቀው እንደለ ተጠይቆ ነገሩ እንግዳ ቢሆንበት እንድ የተማረ ፈለሻ ከሰባት ዓመት በኋላ ሰይሆን እንደማይቀር ገልጸለታል። ምንም እንኳን በሣህለሥላሴ ብልህ መሪነት ሰላምና ደገንነት በሸዋ ቢሰፍንም ስለመላ ኢትዮጵያ ከንጉሡ ጀምሮ ሁሉም ያስብ ነበርና በ1841 እንክበር ለነበረው የእንግሊዝ መንግሥት መልእክተኛ ለካፒቴን ሐሪስ ሊቃውንት እንዲህ ብለው ነገረውታል። «ወደ መወረሻዎቼ ቀኖች ወጥቶ የሰላም መንግሥት ይመሠርታል የተባለለት ቴዎድሮስ አሁን ይነሳል።» እንዲሁም ከጎባት ጋር የሚሠራ ሌላ ሚሲዮናዊ በ1842 እንግሎ በምትበል የትግራይ ከተማ ሲያልፍ ቴዎድሮስ ስለሚከሰትበት ጊዜ የሚያውቀው እንደለ ተጠይቆ ምንም አለማውቁን በበኩሉ ገልጿል።(38)

ክርስቲያኑና ፈለሻው የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ከዘመነ መሰፍንት አልቂት የሚገለገልበት የቴዎድሮስ መከሰቻ ጊዜን በጉጉት መጠበቁን የተገነዘቡ ብልሞች በሁኔታው ለመጠቀም ሞክረዋል። የትግራይ ገዢ ራስ ወልደሥላሴ በ1816 እንደሞቱ ከሰህ በላባቶች የተወለዱት ደጃች ሰበጋዲስና የሰህ ጭፍሮቻቸው ክርስቲያኑን ሲያሰቃዩት እንድ ሰው ቴዎድሮስ ለመሆኑ የሐማሴን ኑዋሪዎችን ከሰመነ በኋላ እድዋ በመግባት የትግራይ ሰዎችን ለመቀስቀስ ጀምሮ ነበር። ግን ገና ከመጀመሪያው ያመኑበትን ሰዎች መበዝበዝና ማጉለለት በማብዛቱ ወዲያውኑ በተከታዮቹ ተገድሏል። እንደዚሁም ትንሹ ራስ አለ

የየጀዎች የምስፍንናን ተረክበው ከደብረ ታበር መምራት እንደጀመሩ ማሳሰቢያ ባለባት የሆነው ደጃች ፋሪስ አሊጋዝ እንደነበረው ዕጋላ እንበሳ እንገሃ ጉንደርን ለመያዝ ሞክሯል። ፋሪስ ተሸንፎ ወደመጣበት ሲበረር ይኸው ዕጋላ እንበሳ ቀሐ ኢየሱስ ገብቶ ቴዎድሮስ መሆኑን ማሳሰቢያ ላይ እንደሰ ተገድሏል።

በቸንከር ገደም በሚማሩበትና ከዘም በጋላ ካሳ ስለ ፍክራ ኢየሱስ ትንቢትና ቴዎድሮስ የሚለውን ስምና መፈክር በማንሳት በኢትዮጵያ ይፈለግ ለመንገሥ ስለሞከሩትም ጭምር ለመስማታቸው አያጠራጥርም። በቸንከር መሠረት በኢትዮጵያ ላይ ነገሥ ስላምን የሚያስገኘው ሰው ማንኛውንም መልእክተኛ እንደሚሆን የሁሉም እምነት ነበርና ካሳ በዚህ ጋላሬነት እግዚአብሔር እንደሚቸው ማመን የጀመሩት በደባርኪ ጭንፈው ከተመለሱ በጋላ ሳይሆን እይቀርም ብለናል። ሆኖም ከዚህ ይፈታ በፊትም ድልና ሌላ ጥሩ ነገር በገጠማቸው ቁጥር እግዚአብሔር ለመንገዳቸውን የሚያቃናላቸው ይመስላቸው ነበር። «እግዚአብሔር ይኸውን እገዛለሁ፤» የሚለው ዘይቤ የማንም የዘመነ መሳፍንት የገበዝ እገዳ ምኞት መግለጫ ቢሆንም በካሳ እፍ ሰፋና ራት ያለ ፍላጎት ይፈገልጽ አልቀረም። ከብዙ የመፎከሪያ ዘይቤዎቻቸው አዘውትረው ይፈቱ የነበሩት «የክርስቶስ ባሪያ» በትንቢተ ኢሳይያስ ስለተነገረለት ማሳሰቢያ ይሆናል።

በደባርኪ በጋላ በራስ አሊ ላይ ሸፍተው ደጋፊዎቻቸውን እንደ ሆኑ ከጣሉ በጋላ በመጨረሻ በእይቻ ጦርነት አግታቸውን በማሸነፍ በዚህ እምስት ዓመታት ያህል ጸንቶ የቆየውን የየጀዎች የምስፍንና ሙን እንዲደመደም አደረጉ።

በእይቻ ጦርነት በጋላ መመሪያቸውን ፍክራ ኢየሱስ ማድረጋቸው አቡነ ሰላማን ከትግራይ በብዙ ጥረት አስመጥተው የመጡትን ፖሊሲ ያሳየናል። በዘመነ መሳፍንት የሃይማኖት ትርጉም ይፈቱና የሥልጣን ሽሚያዎች በረጅም ታሪካቸው ያልተለያዩትን ይተባባሳሉና መንግሥት፣ ጳጳስና ንጉሥ ተራርቀው ቆዩ። የሰሰት ይፈቱና የጸጋ ልጅ እምነት ተከታዮች በመተባበር አቡነ ሰላማን ይፈቱናቸው በመድፈር በሕይወታቸው በማስፈራራት ከጉንደር የተነሱ ትግራይ በሰደት እንዲኖሩ አስገደደዋቸው። ደጃች ውቤ የተዋረደ ተከታይ ከመሆናቸው በላይ ለሚያካሂዱት የበላይነት

ፖለቲካ እንደሚጠቅሙባቸው በግወቅ እቡኑን ረድተዋቸዋል። ከብዙ መላለክ በኋላ በውቤ ፈቃድ ለሰማ መጥተው በ1854 ከካሳ ጋር ጉንደር ተገናኙ።

ጠለቅ ያለ ውይይት ከካሌዴ በኋላ ፍክሬ ኢየሱስ ባለው መሠረት ሁለቱም ለረጅም ጊዜ ተደክሞ የነበረውን የቤተ ክህነትና የመንግሥት እጋርነትን ለማሳደስ ተስማሙ። (39) ቤተ ክህነት በትምህርት ልዩነቶች ለሁለት መቶ አርባ ዓመታት ያህል በጭቅጭቅና በንትርክ በመዘፈቅ ተደክማ ነበር። ግእከለዊ መንግሥትም የገቢ ምንጮችና መብቶች በዘበናይ ጦረኞች ተቀምታ ነበር። ስለዚህ የተደከመችው ቤተ ክህነት የምትጠናከርበትን፣ የወደቀችው ግእከለዊ መንግሥትም የምታንሰራራበትን መንገዶች ቀይሰው፤ ሁለቱም ከጥንት ጀምሮ የነበራቸውን የመደጋገፍ ውል አደሱ። በዚህም በቤተ ክህነትና በመንግሥት መታደስ በዜጎች መካከል ሰላም ይሰፍናል ብለው በማመናቸው ጥንታዊ የሆነውን የእስክንድርያና የኢትዮጵያ ቤተ ክርስቲያኖች እምነት ተዋሕዶን ደግፈው የሰበሰቡ ልደትና የጸጋ ልጅ ትምህርት ተከታዮችን አወገዙ። ሁሉም ክርስቲያን የተዋሕዶ ትምህርትን እንዲከተል አወጀ። ያቅማሙና አዋጁን ያልተቀበሉ ብዙ የነዚህ የተወገዙት ትምህርት ተከታዮች በግርፋትና በሞት ተቀጡ።

ቀጥሎ ደግሞ በደጃች ውቤ ፈቃድ በሰሜን ኢትዮጵያ ገብተው፤ የተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ንብረት የነበሩ ሕንፃና ሰፋፊ ጉልቶች ተስጥተዋቸው በማስተማር ብዙ ተከታዮች ያፈሩት ለዘረዘሩት ሚሲዮናውያን ከገር እንዲበረሩ ተስማሙ። ፕሮቴስታንት ሚሲዮናውያን ኢትዮጵያውያን ክርስቲያኖችን እንደመኑና እንደተጠመቁ ቀጥረው ለስብከታቸው ክርስቲያን በልሆኑ በማተኮራቸው የእቡኑ ሰላማና የንጉሥ ካሳ አክብሮትና ድጋፍ አልተለያቸውም። ከቶሊክ ሚሲዮናውያን ግን ተራውን ክርስቲያን ዘለው አልፈው ቴሱንና መነኩሴውን ለማጥመቅ በመረጋገጣቸው በእቡኑ በኩል ጥላቻን በንጉሡ በኩል ደግሞ ጥርጣራን አሳደሩ። እምነት ያለውን እንደልነበረው ቀጥረው በማጥመቃቸው ለእስክንድርያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ንቀት ሆኖ ለሰላማ ታያቸው። ለካሳ ደግሞ ክርስቲያኖችን ወደካቶሊክ እምነት ማግባት የመንግሥትን መሠረት እንደመሰርሰር ከመምሰሉም በላይ የውቤና የላዘረዘሩት መወደጃትና መዳራት በሱስንዮስ ዘመነ መንግሥት

ቀፈጥሮ የነበረውን የፖለቲካ ችግር እስታወሰቸው። ስለዚህም ግዲቶናውያኑ ወደየመጡበት እንዲሄዱ ቢገደዱ የተጠመቁት እርቀቱያውያን ወደ ተዋሕዶ እምነታቸው እንዲመለሱ ተደረጉ።

እቡኑና ንጉሡ ያደረጉት ስምምነት በኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ አዲስ ዘዴ እንደሌላውን እምብዛም ግብራራትን አይጠይቅም። ከጥንት ከነአብርሃና እጽብሃ ዘመን ጀምሮ የቤተ ክህነትና የመንግሥት አጋርነትና ቀደጋጋሪነት በተለያዩ ዘመናት ለኢትዮጵያ ፖለቲካ ዋናው መልኩና ገጽታው ሆኖ ቶይቷል። ይህ አጋርነት በየዘመኑ በሰላሰላ፣ በይኩኖ እምብዛ፣ በዘርአያዕቆብና በፋሲለደስ እየታደሰ መጥቷል። የኢትዮጵያ ጭምር ካካበቢዋ ዘልቆ እንዲታወቅና በህልዋም እድገትና ጥልቀት እንዲያገኝ ረድቷል። (40) በውስጥ የሥልጣን ሽጫያዎች ምክንያት ጭቆና ሁከቶችና ግጭቶች ፍቱን መፍትሔ ሁኖ ተገኝቷል። በዚህም ካሳ ግእከላዊ መንግሥትን ለማጠናከር እርምጃ መውሰድ ሲጀምሩ አዲስ ዘዴ በመሸት ፈንታ ተቀባይነት እንደሚኖረው ያወቁትን የደረሱን ግደስ መረጡ። ልክም ነበሩ፣ ለዘመኑ ከዚህ የተሻለ ሌላ እማራጭ ርእዮተ ዓለም አልነበረምና።

የቤተ ክህነትና የመንግሥት ደኅንነት ተዘግጅና ተወራራሽ እንደነበር የምንገነዘበው ከአንድ ዓመት በኋላ ካሳ ንጉሡ ነገሥት ቴዎድሮስ ተብለው እንደነገሡ ለአንድ መቶ ዓመት ያህል የጉንደር ጩኔነትን አሳውቅም ብላ ወደነበረችው ወደሸዋ ሲዘምቱ ለሰማም ጩኔላቸው ሸዋ የሶስት ልደትና የጸጋ ልጅ እምነቶች ምሽግ ሁና ነበርና የተዋሕደን ግእከላዊነት ለማጠናከር አብረው ተነሱ። እንዲያውም የእንደ ዜና መዋዕል ደራሲ አለቃ ወልደማርያም እቡኑን ለዘመቻው ቀደቃሽ በማድረግ እንዲህ ይላሉ፤ «የሃይማኖት ልጅ እግዚአብሔር የገጠኝ ነህና ሸዋ እንሂድ ሃይማኖት እናቅና ብለው ስለዚህ ከንጉሡ ጋራ ተስማምተው መጡ።» በርቀትዋና በገዢዎችዋ ብልሃት ከሰሜኑ የዘመነ መሰፍንት ጦርነት እልቂት ተገልሎ የነበረው ሕዝብዋም፤ «እዚህ በኋላ በመንዝ ሲደርስ ጳጳስ ሰላማ በክህነት ንጉሥ በመንግሥት ጭንቆ ቢያያቸው የምሥራቁ የግድም የኢፍራታ ሰው ሁሉ ደስ እያለው አመነ።» (41)

እቡኑና ካሳ ከ1854 የቤተ ክህነትና የመንግሥት አጋርነት ሲያድሱ ካሳ የወደፊት አቅጣጫቸውን ለማሳወቅ አስበው ንጉሥ

ተብለው እንደጠሩ አወጀ። ንጉሥ የሚለው ግዕረግ ለብቻው በሽዋ ካልሆነ በሌሎቹ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍሎች ግንም መስፍን ተጠቅሞበት እያውቅም ነበር። ከሰ ንጉሥ የተባሉት በቤተ ክርስቲያን ተቀብተው ሲሆን ይህን ያደረጉት ራስ አሊን ቢያሸንፉም ቅሉ ዓላማቸው የኒህን መስፍንነት ለመንጠቅ ሳይሆን ሌላና ሰፊ እንደሆነ ለማሳየት ነበር። በሥርዓተ ንግሥም ጊዜ ከሚሰታቸው ከወይዘሮ ተዋበች ጋር « ቀርበው ሠራዊትዎንም ያል ቀረብህ እጠላኃለሁ ብለው ዓዋጅ ቢነገሩ ከሠራዊትዋም ከመኪንንትዎም በዚህ ምክንያት እግዚአብሔር የመረጣቸው እየተገኙ ቀረቡ የመንግሥትም ሥርዓት ወሬ በየሀገሩ ተነገረ። » ለቤተ ክህነት ኃላፊዎችና ለተከታዮቻቸው መቀረብ ለምን እንደሰፈለጋቸው በእግዚአብሔር ሥርዓት መኖር የሱን ይቅርታ፣ ግለትም ለሕዝብና ለአገር ሰላም፣ ያስገኛል በማለት አስረደ። ጌላ በ1862 ለእንግሊዝ ንግሥት ለቪክቶሪያ በጸፋት ደብዳቤ ኢትዮጵያ በውስጥ ችግሮች የታወከችውና በውጭ ጠላቶች የተደረረችው የእግዚአብሔርን ሥርዓት በለመከተላቸው ነበር ብለው ገልጸዋል። ይህን የካሳ እምነት በመከተል ይመስላል ጸሐፊ ትእዛዛቸው አለቃ ዘነብ የቴዎድሮስ መነሳት የሰውን ክፉነት ከመለወጥ፣ ግለትም አስተያየትን ከማሸሸል ጋር ያያዙት።

ይህንን ክፉነት በየ ጊዜ እግዚአብሔር በሀበሽ ላይ ንጉሥ ቴዎድሮስን አስነሳ ምንዝር የማይወድ። ገንዘብ ሐሰት ሥርቶት የማይወድ። ሸፍጥንም ሁሉ የማይወድ። እግዚአብሔርን የፈራ። እጅግ የሚሰጥ። እንገዳ የወደደ ለታመመ የሚያዝን በእንዲት ቤት የቶረበ።(42)

የቴዎድሮስን መከሰት በጉጉት ሲጠብቅ የቶየ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ የፈለገውን በየካቲት 1855 አገኘ። ካሳ ውቤን በደረሰጌ በሸነፉ በሰሰተኛው ቀን ቴዎድሮስ ተብለው ነገሡ። በእንደ ቃል ብቻ ለሕዝቡ ዕቅዶቻቸውንና ግበቻቸውን ገለጹ። ከሳይ እንደተትነው ካሳ በኢትዮጵያ ዙፋን ላይ ወደመቀመጥ እንዲያመሩ ያነሳሳቸው በደባርኪ የደረሰባቸው ሽንፈት በመሆኑ ግብጾችን መቋቋምና ከኢትዮጵያ የወሰደዋቸውን በታዎች ማስመለስ የቴዎድሮስ መሠረታዊ ዓላማ ነበር ግለት ይቻላል። ግን ይህን መሠረታዊ ዓላማቸው ግብ ለማድረስ ከመጀመራቸው በፊት

የጋራ ሕግ መመዝገብ አለባቸው ብለው ከመኑባቸው እንደ የቤተ
ጌታና የመንግሥት አጋርነትን ማደስ ሲሆን ከሌሎች መካከል ደግሞ
ገገዎችን እስተያየት መለወጥና በሕግና በስነ ሥርዓት መኖርን በምሳሌ
ግብዓት እንዲሁም የተዘበውን የመንግሥት አቋምን ማስተካከል
ሚችሉ።

ቴዎድሮስን ከልጅነታቸው ጀምሮ በሰዎች ተወዳጅነትን ወይም
መወሰንን ካረፉላቸው ጠባቦች መካከል ሐቀኝነታቸውና ታማኝነታቸው
ዝና። በረጅሙ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ሒደት ኢትዮጵያውያን እውነት
መናገራቸውና በታላቸው ጽኑ በመሆናቸው በጉረቤትና በሩቅ ሕዝቦች
ታውቀዋል። ካሰራሰድስተኛው ክፍለ ዘመን ጀምሮ ግን እነዚህ ጠባቦች
ጽኑ ኢትዮጵያውያን እንግዶች እየሆኑ መጥተዋል። በግራኝ ወረራ
ጽኑነት ሰው ጉልቱንና ሕይወቱን እንደያጣ ፈርቶ ንጉሡን ከድቷል
ጽኑነትን ከኋላ። ከግራኝ ወረራ በኋላም ሰላምና የመንፈስ እረፍት
የሚያሳዩ ሁኔታዎች በመፈራረቅ በመነሳታቸው የእድር በይነትና
መቀኝነት ጠባቦች እየጉሉ ሒደ። በፈት ኢትዮጵያን በሐቀኝነታቸው
የታወቁትን ያህል ከዚህ ጊዜ ወዲህ ደግሞ በወላዊነታቸውና
እውቀትነታቸው ዝናን አተረፉ። ይህን የጠባይ ለውጥ ያስመጡ
ጽኑነትን አለመረጋጋትና የኑሮ እስተማማኝ አለመሆን ሲሆኑ
ቴዎድሮስ እነዚህን ገና ሳያሻሽሉ የእስተያየት ለውጥ ማምጣትን
ሚቀድሙ።

ገና ሽፍታ በነበሩበት ጊዜ ያገኙትን ተከፍለው ለመብላት ከሌሎች
ጽኑነት ጋር ተማምለው ነበርና እነዚህ ሽፍቶች በንድ ወቅት ታል
ጊደናቸውን አፍርሰው እንድ በረ እርደው ብቻቸውን ቢበሉ «እናንተ
ሐይቀኞች» ብለው እንደወጉዋቸው ዘነብ ይናገራሉ። በሌላ ጊዜ
ደግሞ፣ ወዲያው ከአይሸል ጦርነት በኋላ ይመስላል፤ ሁለት ሰዎች
ግብፁ ከፈታቸው ቀረቡ። እንደ ለሌላው አንድ ፈረስ ሰጥቶት ነበርና
ወቅታቸውን እንዲመለስ ቢያስታውሰው ተቀባዩ ለመከድ አሰበ። ግን
ግብፁን ፈት ፈርቶ መቀበሉን አመነ። ዘነብ ታሪኩን እንዲህ ብለው
ያዩታል፤ «ደጅ እዝማች ካሳም እግዚአብሔርን እንደ ፈራ በዩ ጊዜ
እውነቱ። እኔ እከፍልሃለሁ አሉት። ለከሳሹ ፲ ብር ፩ ፈረስ።
፪ ደቅ ሰጡት። እውነትን ሰው ሁሉ እንዲማር ብለው። በአደባባይ
የሚረፉ ሰው ሁሉ እጅግ ደስ አለው።»(43)

ቴዎፊሉስ ሸልድጫዬር የሚባል ፕሮቴስታንት ሚሲዮናዊ፣ የእጅ
 ሥራ ዕውቀት ስለነበረው፣ እደሪ ትምህርት ቤት ከፍቶ ፓፋቶችንና
 ፈላሽዎችን በማስተማሩና በኋላም የወደጀቸው የእንግሊዝኛው የሊቀ
 መኪስ ዮሐንስ ልጅ በማግባቱ ቴዎድሮስ ይወደድ ነበርና
 እስከመጨረሻቸው አልተለያቸውም። ሐቀኝነት ለማስለመድ ቅጥፈት
 ለማስቀረት ብለው ከደረጉዋቸው ነገሮች እሱም እንደንድ ይናገራል።
 እንድ ቀን እንድ ሰው ሀያ ብር ወድቶ አገኝቶ በለቤቱን ለማወቅ
 በለመቻሉ ደጅ ጠንቶ፣ ከሩቅ «አቤት አቤት» ብሎ ገንዘቡን ሰጣቸው።
 እሳቸውም በእደበባይ እመስገነው በለቤቱ እስቲገኝ ድረስ ያንተ ይሁን
 ብለው ብሩን መረቁለት። ሌላ ሀያ ብር ጨምረው አሰናበቱት። ይህን
 ያየ ሮሌ በሌላ ጊዜ እንዲሁ «አቤት አቤት» ብሎ ቀርቦ እርባ ብር
 ወድቶ ማግኘቱን ነገራቸው። እሳቸውም ሁኔታውን እስተውለው፣
 በጅሮንደቸው እንዲረከበው ከደረጉ በኋላ አሰናበቱት።(44) ሐቀኝነትን
 ለማስተማር ሲሉ ለአብነት ያደረጉዋቸው ታሪኮች ብዙ ተመዝገበው
 ይገኛሉ። ሆኖም እነዚህ በቂ ምሳሌዎች ናቸው።

ታማኝነት ከሐቀኝነት የሚመነጭ ሲሆን እንደ ጠባይ ከለሁለተኛው
 በሰው አይገኝም። ቴዎድሮስ ከልጅነታቸው ጊዜ ጀምሮ ሐቀኛ
 እንደመሆናቸው ለታማኝነታቸውም ከብዙዎች ታሪኮቻቸው ጥቂቶችን
 ብቻ እናውሳለን።

ገና ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ሽፍታ እንደሆኑ ከጥቂቶች ተከታዮቻቸው
 ጋር ሁነው እንደ መንደር ሲዘርፉ ሁለቱ በጣም ቀለሉና ወደቁ።
 የተቀረው ታሪክ በዘነብ እንደበት ያምራል። «የወደቁትንም እንደን
 እርስዎ ተሸከሙ እንደን አሸከሮችዎ የልጅ ካሳም እግርዎ በከረምት
 እንደሚሄድ ሰው ብዙ ጭቃ እነሣ እግርዎ። የተወጋው ሰው ደም።
 በድግዎ እየወረደ ሰውነትዎን ሁሉ አጠመቅዎ። የተወጉት ሁለቱም
 ከሰፈር ገብተው ሞቱ።»(45) ካሳ ለወደጀቻቸው ምን ያህል ታማኝ
 እንደነበሩ እንድ ሌላ ታሪክ ከዘነብ እናገኛለን። ተኩሪሮችና ገንጀር
 ሽንቅሎች ወደጀቻቸውና የአባታቸውም ገባሮች ነበሩና አብረዋቸው ሳሉ
 ከደጋው ሲዘርፉና ሲፈነግሉ አገዎች መጡ። ካሳ አገዎችን ወግተው
 ከማረኩ በኋላ ለተኩሪሮች አለቃ ለእድሪስ፣ «መቶውን አገው መርጠው
 ሰጡት ገዘው ብለው እንተን ሊገዛህ ነበርና አሉት።» የተቀሩትን
 ቀደም ብሎ እንደተጠቀሰው ሁለት ሁለት ጀርዋቸውን ቅርጠው
 መለሱዋቸው።

ቴዎድሮስ ስለታማኝነት ሰፊ እስተያየት ነበራቸው። እባት ለልጅ
 ወይም ለሌላ ሰብአዊ ሕይወት እንደተሰጠው እሳቸውም እግዚአብሔር መርሞ
 እንደነገረው ከማመናቸው የተነሳ የሕዝባቸው ታማኝ እገልጋይ
 ሆኖ ገደታ እንደለባቸው ተቀበሉ። ዘነብ ደጋገመው እንደሰዩትና
 ያህሉኝ ምንጮችም እንደተደገፈው ቴዎድሮስ በመጀመሪያ
 ያህሉኝ የነበሩት በሀሪዮች፣ በተለይም ደግነታቸው፣
 ርግራጌያቸውና ይቅር በይነታቸው፣ ለሕዝባቸው ከነበራቸው
 ታማኝነት፣ እገልገይነትና እባታዊ ኃላፊነት የፈለቁ ነበሩ። ምሳሌዎችን
 ጥያቄ ታሪኩን ማንዘዘት ይሆናልና ጥቂቶች መጥቀሱ ይበቃል።
 ቴዎድሮስ ለድሆችና ለእቅመ ቢሶች ተጨናቂ እንደነበሩ ቫልድሜዬር
 እንደ ልብ በሚነካ ምሳሌ ይነገረናል። ቴዎድሮስ በመንገድ ሲያልፉ
 እንደ ችግረኛ በልቴት ወድቃ ቢያዩ ከፈረሰቸው ወርደው የለበሱትን
 የግንባታ እንስተው ደረቡለት። ቫልድሜዬርን ያለውን ብር እንዲያበድራቸው
 ወደቀትና የነበረውን እምስት ብር ተቀብለው ሰጧት። ለቫልድሜዬርም
 እውነት ብሩን እንደ መቶ እድርገው መለሱለት። (46)

ሥረኛ መሰፍንት የገል ገናናነትን በመፈለግ በፈጠሩት ትርምስ
 ሕግ፣ ሰላም ናፍቶት ነበርና በሞር ሜዳ የተማረከውን ሁሉ በዘነብ
 እንደሆነ «ሰለ መድኃኔ ዓለም ብለው ይምሩዋቸዋል።» ከማሩት በኋላ
 እንደነበሩ ገን ታማኝነት እንደማጉደልና ዓላማቸውን እንደመቃወም
 ይመቁጠር ኃይለኛ ቅጣት ይቀጡታል። አሁንም ዘነብ እንደዚህ
 እውነት ሁኔታ እንዲህ ይላሉ፤ «ምነው ምራያችሁ ወጋችሁን በሏቸው
 ጊዜ ሞት ይገባናል ፈረደ። እስደበደቧቸው ሞቱ። ሁሉም።»
 ቴዎድሮስ ጨካኝነት የተጻፈው በካባቢያቸው በልነበሩና ጊዜ ካለፈና
 ማርቶ ከተጋነኑ በኋላ በሰሙ ሰዎች ሲሆን የመጨረሻ ቅጣት የፈጸሙት
 እውነቱን ጊዜ በከደዋቸው ላይ ነበር። በዋግሹም ገብረመድኅንና
 ዘፈንወደድ ብሩ የተፈጸመው የሞት ቅጣት እንደምሳሌ ሊጠቀስ
 ይቻላል። ዋግሹም ገብረ መድኅን የራስ እሊ ተከታይ ሆነው በአይሻል
 ሞት ተሰለው ተማረኩ። ከሰ እስታመው ካደኑዋቸው በኋላ፤ «እይዘዎ
 ሕይወት መቶ ነፍጥ ሰጥተው አገራቸውን አገውን ሹመው ሰደዋቸው
 ሆነ። ከዚያም ወዲያ ከደ እግዚአብሔር ክዳታቸውን እይቶ ንጉሡ
 እንደሚላቸው።» ሰለ ቢትወደድ ብሩ ደግሞ ዘነብ፤ «ንጉሥ ቴዎድሮስም
 እንደ አድርገው ያምኗቸው ነበር» ብለዋል። ቶንሲል ፕላውደን
 ቴዎድሮስ መሪነት ለኢትዮጵያ እድገት እንደሚጠቅም ተገንዝቦ

ከእንግሊዝ ንግሥት ጋር ለማቀራረብ እየተዘጋጀ እንደሰ በጋረድ ተገደለ። ምንም እንኳን ጋረድ በጣም የሚወደዋቸው የክንፉ ልጅ ቢሆንም እሱንና ተከታዮቹን ክፉኛ ቀጡዋቸው። ምክንያቱም ጋረድ ታማኝነት ከማጥፋት አልፋ ለእገር ይበጀሉ ለሉዋቸው ግቦችም እንቅፋት ሆነባቸዋልና።

እንደነዚህ የመሰሰሉ ሰዎች ፍጹም ቅጣት ሲፈጸምባቸው በግልጽ ተቃዋሚዎቻቸው ሁነው የወጉዋቸውና የተማረኩት እንደነ ደጃች ብሩ፤ ውቤና ምኒልክ የመሰሰሉትን ግን በእምባ ከማሰር በስተቀር ሌላ እርምጃ አልወሰዱባቸውም። እንደነውቤ የተፎከከሪዎቻቸውን ዓይኖች በጋለ ወስፈ አልሸነቅሩም ወይም ወገብ እስኪጉብጥ ድረስ እጆችና እግሮችን አጣምረው አላሰሩም። ያልተተናኩሉዋቸውን ትላልቅ ሰዎች የተወሰደባቸውን ግዛትና ጉልት ከመመለስ በስተቀር ችግር አላደረሱባቸውም። ጦረኛ መሰፍንት በማንገሥ በመሸር እንደ ሰንጠረዥ ይሜወቱባቸው ከነበሩት በሕይወት የተገኙት ነገሥታትን ከማክበር አልፈው ምክርም ይጠይቁዋቸው ነበር።

ቴዎድሮስን ትልቅ ብስጭትና የጠባይ ለውጥ ያደረሰባቸው እንዲሁም ርገሩገና መሐሪ የነበሩትን ያህል እንዲጨኩ ያደረጋቸው በመኑዋቸውና የዓለማቸው ደጋፊ መስለው በተጠቀሙባቸው ሰዎች ክዳት መሆኑ ሊጠረጠር አይችልም። እንደ ግራዝማች ዓለሜ የሚባል ባለሟላቸውን በጣም ስለሚያምኑት በመቅደስ በነበረው ግምጃ ቤታቸው ጠባቂ አድርገውት ነበር። ይህ በቴዎድሮስ እሸራለሁ፤ እታሰራለሁ ወይም እገደላለሁ የማለት ፍርሃት ሊኖረው የማይችል ዓለሜ ሊሸመውና ሊሸልመው እቅም ካልነበረው አመዲ በሽር ጋር ተለልኩ ወደሱ መኩብለሉን ሲሰሙ፤ «ግራዝማች ዓለሜ የከደኝ እንግዲህ ማንን አምናለሁ» ብለው ተበሰዉ፤ አዘኑ። ለዚህም ነው በቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ ብቻ ሰይሆን በጠቃላይ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ የገብርዬ የማይወሰውል ታማኝነት ብርቅና ልብ የሚነካ ሆኖ የሚታየው።

ረጅሙን የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ጠለቅ ብለን ብናስተውል የታማኝነት ጉድለት ለሰላምና ለእድገት ትልቅ እንቅፋት ሁኖ ይገኛል። የጋለፊነት ስሜታቸው ከፍ ያለ ብዙ ነገሥታት የሕዝቡን ችግር ለማቃለል ተነሳስተው ይረዱናል፤ ያገዙናል ብለው የሸሙዋቸው ሰዎች እያደሙና እያሰደሙ፤ እየሸፈቱና እያሸሸፈቱ ስለሰቸገሩዋቸው ዓለማዎቻቸው

ይህ ልውብ ተቀርቦል። ለምሳሌ እኔ ዘርአያዕቆብ ለሕዝብና ለሀገር ጠቃሚ
 ያሏቸውን ግቦች ለማስፈጸም የራሳቸው ልጆች ይበልጥ ታማኞችና
 ተግባራዊ የሚሆኑላቸው መስሏቸው ቁልፍ በሆኑ የመንግሥት በታዎች
 እስቀመጡባቸው። ግን ሁሉም ታማኝነታቸውን አጉድለው ያበታቸውን
 እስቀረቡላቸው ከሚቃወሙ ጋር ሲያሄሩ በመገናኛቸው ያለማመንታት
 ደሞት ቅጣት አስቀጡባቸው። ለሀገር እድገት ከፍተኛ የክደት
 መቆጣጠሪያ በፋሲለደስና በቀዳማዊ ኢየሱስ ዘመናት ታይተዋል። በሃያ
 ደረጃት ዓመት ዘመነ መንግሥታቸው እንደአሸን የሚፈልቁትን ቀማኞች
 አዋፍተው፤ በነሱ ምክንያት የተደከሙትን የንግድ መስመሮች
 አስከፍተው፤ በሁከት ብዛት የተዘበቁትን የመራት ይዘታ አቃንተው፤
 ምጽዋን በመዝጋት የኢትዮጵያን የውጭ ንግድ ያገደትን ቱርኮች
 አንበርክከው፤ የውጭ ግንኙነትን አስተካክለው ኢትዮጵያ ታሪካዊ
 ይቃዋን እንድትይዝ ለማድረግ ኢየሱስ ተቃርበው ነበር። ግን በተራ
 ቅናት ተነሳሰተው ሚስታቸውና አልጋ ወራሽነቱን ያረጋገጡለት ልጃቸው
 እስቀረቡላቸው በሆነ መንገዶች አስጨፍጭፈው አስገደሏቸው።

ዘርአያዕቆብ፤ ፋሲለደስና ኢየሱስ በነበሩባቸው ዘመናት ኢትዮጵያ
 የውጭ ጠላት ስጋት አልነበራትምና ጉልትና ሹመት ተቀማሁ ወይም
 እንደሆነ በማለት በለሟሉ ሲያሄሩ፤ ቢሸፍቱ ለያስደንቀን ይችላል።
 ቴዎድሮስ በነገሡበት ጊዜ ግን የግብጽ ወረራ ስጋቱ ትንሽ እንዳልነበረ
 ዲሳይ ከደጃች ከንፋ ታሪክ ጋር ተያይዞ ተገልጿል። እነዚያ ቀደም
 ያሉት ነገሥታት በበቶቻቸው እግር ተተክተው የመንግሥ መብት
 የነበራቸውን ያህል የሸሙባቸው መኪንንትም በበለበትነታቸውና ከቤተ
 መንግሥት ጋር በአምቻ ጋብቻ በመተሳሰራቸው መሸምን
 እንደመብታቸው የሚያዩ ነበሩ። በቴዎድሮስ የተሸሙት ግን በጦረኛ
 መሳፍንት የተነቀሉ፤ የተንገለቱና የታሰሩ በለበቶች እንደመሆናቸው
 ቴዎድሮስን የዘመነ መሳፍንት ሥርዓት አልበኝነትና አልቂት የማቶም
 ፍገማ ለራሳቸው ጥቅም እንደነበር ለመገንዘብ ችለዋል። የሸሙባቸው
 ደዎች ፍትህ በሞላበት አስተዳደር ሕዝቡንና አገሪቱን
 እንደያረጋጉላቸው ነበርና ሲመርጡባቸውም የሕዝብ ድጋፍ
 እንደሚያገኙ እያረጋገጡ ነበር። ራስ አሊን በአይሸል ጦርነት እንደሸነፉ
 በሰባታ ዋገኹም ገብረመድኅንን የሸሙት ሕዝቡን የጠቀሙ መስሏቸው
 ነበር። እንዲሁም ውቤን በደረሰጌ ሲይዙ ትግራይን እንዲያስተዳድሩ
 የሰጡት በአምባ ታስረው የማቀቁት የወልደሥላሴ ቅርብ ዘመድ የሆኑት
 ወልደጋዳ አርአያን ነበር። ግን ግብር በሚሰበሰቡበት ጊዜ ሕዝቡን

ሰላንገላቱት ቢከሰቸው እኒህን ሽረው በምትካቸው እስር ያጉበጠው ሌላ ባለባት ካሰ ሰባጋደስን ላኩ። ወሎና ሸዋ ከዘመቱም በኋላ በተቃወሙባቸው ባለባቶች ሌሎች የሚያዘምደዋቸውን ባለባቶች መርጠው ተኩ እንጂ በደ እምጥተው አላስቀመጡም። ሸዋን እንዲያስተዳድሩ የመረጡባቸው የምኒልክ እጎት መርዕድ አዝማች ኃይሌ ከአመደ በሽር ጋር በመላላካቸው ከታሰሩ በኋላ ሌላ የሣህለሥላሴ ልጅ የሆኑት አቤቶ ደርጌ በሸዋ ሕዝብ ዘንድ ተወዳጅነት እንዳላቸው ተረጋግጦ ተሸመ። ገን በእስተዋይነታቸው የተከበሩት ደርጌም በግያዛልቅ እድግ ተሰትረው በመገኘታቸው እንዲታሰሩ ሆነ። ይህ ሁሉ ቴዎድሮስን በግበሳጩት ሳይወሰን ግራም አጋብቶባቸዋል።

የሕዝብ ደኅንነትና የሀገር መረጋጋት የቴዎድሮስ ተቀዳሚ ግቦች ነበሩና ተቀባይነት የሚኖራቸው አስተዳደሪዎችን በመሸም አልተወሰኑም። ጦረኛ መሰፍንት ሕዝቡን እርስ በርሱ ሲያራኩቱት ነበርና፤ «እባት ያለህ ያባትህን ሰጥቼኃለሁ ያባት የሌለህ እኔን ደጅ ጥና አባትህ እኔ ነኝ» እንዲሁም፤ «ባለህ እርጋ» እያሉ ለማረጋገጥ ሞክረዋል። ከዚህ ጋር እያይዘው አለቃ ወልደማርያም እንደጻፉት፤ «ወምበደ ከደር ሌባ ከመንደር» ጠፋ፤ «መራት ቀጥ ብላ ተገዝቶ በትግራም በግራም ዘግቼም መኪንንቱም በላገርም ገባ።» ስማቸው ያልታወቀው ሌላው የዜና መዋዕል ደራሲ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ የቴዎድሮስ ግቦች ተረድተና ደግፎ፤ ተቀብሎ እንደነበር ሰፋ አድርገው ገልጸውታል።

ከዚህ በኋላ በነገሡበት በደብረ ስጌ ሁነው አዋጅ አስነገሩ እንዲህ ብለው አራሽ እረስ የወንድ መኩነን ሴት ወይዘሮ ባለ ጉልት ባለ ርስት እየ አባትህ ሰጥቼህ አለሁ ነጋዴም ነገድ በተቀማህበት ደንጊያ ደርድረህ ወደኔ ና። ተወኝ ሌባ ተወኝ ወምበደ ግባ እቀማለሁ እስርቃለሁ ብትል ለአካላህ እዘንለት። እይዘህ ድኃ እይዘህ ወታደር ደስ ይበልህ በክርስቶስ ኃይል ወጥቻለህ አለሁ። የኢያሱ ይብቃ ብለው አስነገረው በሰሜን ወደጉንደር ተጓዙ

ጉንደርም ከጥንት ከነገሥታቱ ገምብ
ገብተው የጉንደር ሰው ሁሉ በእልልታ
በደስታ ተቀበለዎ።(47)

ራሳቸውንና ቀደምቶቻቸውን ለሰቸገሩ የክሕደት ብዛት፤ ለሸፍትነት
ጭረትና ለገዢው መደብ መተዳደሪያ ጦረኝነትና ዝርፊያ መሆን
ጭረታዊ ምክንያት የመሬት ይዘታው እንደሆነ ቴዎድሮስ
ተገንዝበውታል። በረጅሙ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ መሬት የገባሩ ወይም
የእርስ አደሩ ርስትና የወል ንብረት መሆን ገዢው መደቡን በጉልት
ጭልክ ከገበሬው በሚያገኘው ግብር ብቻ እንዲተዳደር ወስኖታል።
ገዢው መደብና ጭፍርቹ፤ ደጋፊዎቹ ይህ ገቢ ተደላድሰው እንዲኖሩ
ጸላጊነት ላላቸው ገበሬውን፤ ነጋዴውንና ባለ እጅን በመዝረፍ ወጣት
ጭገታቸውን ፈንግለው በመሸጥ ኑሮዋቸውን ለመደጉም ተገደደ።
ሕዝብ በዚህ ሁኔታ የሁልጊዜ ድህ ሆኖ በመቅረቱ እንደ በሌላው
እንደቀናና እንደመቀኝ በጠቃላይ ደግሞ እርስ በርሱ እንዲራኩት
ሆኖታል። ሀገሪቱንም ደጋግሞ ለውጭ ጠለት አጋልጧል። ይህን ሁኔታ
ጸልለው ግብጽን ለመቋቋም እንደማይችሉ በመረዳት ጥቅሱ
እንደሚያሳየን ቴዎድሮስ መሲሐዊ አመራራቸውን ገበሬና ነጋዴ ሌላው
ጭጋን እንዳይፈራና ሁሉም ተለይቶቻቸው የማያውቀውን የሰጋት
ጭንፈስ ከልቡ እንዲያስወጣ በማድረግ ጀመሩ።

ስለዚህም ከላይ ከተጠቀሰው አዋጅ ቀጥሎ የወጣው የባሪያ ንግድን
የሚያቶም ድንጋጌ ነበር። አዋጅ በማወጅ ብቻ ሳይወሰኑ፤ «ጉና ላይ
ጭችን የወደድጋትን ምረጥ እያሉ አጋቧቸው እርስ በርሳቸው።»(48)
ዘነብ አልቀጠሉበትም እንጂ ነፃ የወጡት ባሮች ሠርተው
የሚተዳደሩበትን ዘዴም ሳይፈልጉላቸው አልቀረም። የባሪያ ንግድ
ጭከልከል ቴዎድሮስ የመጀመሪያው ንጉሥ አልነበሩም። በዚህ
ጭዕሎች ግልጽ ብሎ በይጠቀስም ብዙ ቀደምት መሪዎች፤ በተለይ
እንደ ዘርአያዕቶብ የመሳሰሉት፤ ዝርፊያንና ቅሚያን ሲከለክሉ
እብረውም ሕዝብና አገር አጥፊ የሆነውን ባሪያ መፈንገልና መሸጥ
ጭገታቸውን ሞክረው ይሆናል። የባሪያ ንግድ የሚከለክል ግልጽ ያለ
አዋጅ በማውጣት ቀዳሚነት ያላቸው አፄ ሱስንዮስ ሲሆኑ እሳቸውም
ጭልላ ዘዴ በኢትዮጵያ ላይ ሰፍኖ የነበረውን ሥርዓት አልበኝነትን
አጥፍተው ሕዝቡን በዘመናዊ መንገድ ለማስተዳደር ፈልገው ነበር።

ቱርኮች ምጽዋ ተቀምጠው ለባሪያ ፈንጋቶች የለኪና አስመጭ አገልግሎት በመስጠታቸው ንግድ በተለይ በሰሜን እትዮጵያ ተግባራዊ። ወደውጭ በተላከው ባሪያ ብዙ የዚህ ክፍል ጦረኛ መሰፍንት ከብረዋል፤ ሶይላ አገኝተዋል። እነራስ ሚካኤል ሰሐል፤ ራስ ወልደሥላሴ፤ ደጃቸው ቤ የብዙ ነፍጥ ባለቤት የሆኑት አሞሌ በመሸጥ አልነበረም። የዉው ንግድም በነሱ ዘራፊነት ተደክሞ እንደነበር የተለያዩ ዜና መዋዕሎች ያሳያሉ። ውቤ እንደተሸነፉ ከአምባቸው የወጣ የሀብት ክምችት ዝርዝር ይህን ይመስላል፡- ከተራ ጠበንጃ ሌላ 500 ተራዘሚ ባለቤታድ፤ ሁለት ጋን ሙሉ መርፈ፤ ወርቅና ብር፤ እህል፤ ሽግ፤ ግር፤ ቅቤ፤ ምንግፍ፤ መከዳ፤ ዋንጫ፤ ብርሌ፤ ብርጭቶ፤ ካራ፤ አቶግዳ፤ ግጭድ፤ ገጃሞ፤ ወረንጦ፤ አጋም እሸህ፤ ቅባኑግና ከሰል። ከዚህ ዝርዝር ውስጥ የትኛው ከገበሬ፤ የትኛው ከነጋዴ፤ የትኛው ከባለ እጅና የትኛው ደግሞ ከውጭ እንደተገኘ መገንዘብ አያስቸግርም። ግራር በበዘበት አገር የግራር እሸህ ያከበቱ ጦረኛ መሰፍንት ብዝበዘቸው ምንኛ ቅጥ ያጣ እንደነበር ይታያል። ይህ ቅጥ ያጣ ዘረፋ ገበሬውን አስንፎ፤ ሲብስበትም መራቱን ጥሎ እንደሸሸ፤ እንደሰደድ አስገድዶ ሕዝቡን ከረሀብና ከበሽታ እንዳይላቀቅ አድርጎታል።

ይህን ሁሉ ያዩና የተገነዘቡ ቴዎድሮስ የጥንቱን አስተዳደር እንዲሁም የባለጉልትና ገባር ገንኙት በመመለስ ብቻ ዓላማዎቻቸውን ለማራመድ እንደማይችሉ ሰለወቁ የግብር አሰባሰብን በሚመለከት መሠረታዊ ለውጥ ለማድረግ አቀደ። አሁንም ይህን እቅድ ለመቅረጽ ቴዎድሮስ የመጀመሪያው መሪ አልነበሩም። የጉልት ሥርዓት ገበሬውን ቅጥ ለጣ ዝርፊያ እንደጋለጠው ብዙ ቀደምት መሪዎች ተረድተውት ለመለወጥ ሞክረዋል። ሆኖም ሙከራው በቴዎድሮስ ውድቀት እንደሰከተለ የነዚያንም ዘመን አውክዋል፤ የብዙዎቹንም እድሜ ሰያሰጥር አልቀረም።

በጉልት ሥርዓት ግብር የሚሰበሰበው ከመሪት ሳይሆን በመሪት ተጠቃሚ ከሆነው ገባርና ዘላን ስለሆነ ገባር ተባለ። ግብሩ የሚተመነው በሲሶ፤ እርቦ፤ ወዘተ ነበር። ምንም እንኳን የባለጉልት ወኪል እህል ተወቅቶ እስኪሰፈር ድረስ ከአውድግ ባይለይም ሳይደብቅ አይቀርም በማለት ከድርሻቸው በላይ ይወስዳል። በዘመቻ ጊዜ ደግሞ የጉተራ እህልና የጋጣ ከብት የወታደር ስንቅ ይሆናል። ገበሬውን ከዚህ ዓይነት ብዝበዘ ለማደን በታሪክ የመጀመሪያ ሙከራ በማድረግ የታወቁት

ቀዳማዊ ቴዎድሮስ (የነገሡት 1412-13) ናቸው። የቴዎድሮስ እርምጃ ምን እንደሆነ በደንብ በይታወቅም ቴዎድሮስ የሚለው ስም መሲሐዊ ትርጉም እንዲኖረው አድርገዋል። ከሰባቸው በኋላ እፄ ዘርአያዕቆብ ገባሩን ከብዝሃነት ለማደን ብዙ ጥረዋል። ሆኖም አጠቃላይ መሠረታዊ ለውጥ ለማድረግ በመሞከር ሕይወታቸውን ያጡ እፄ ዘድንግል (የነገሡት 1603-1604) ናቸው። «ሰብእ ሐራ ወገባር ምድር» የሚል አዋጀቸው ገበሬውን በቀጥታ የመንግሥት ገባር የሚያደርግ ነበር። መኳንንት ኃይል አግኝተው የንጉሠ ነገሥቱን ሥልጣን በመሸግታቸው ወታደሮቻቸውም ገበሬውን ስለጠቁት ዘድንግል እነዚህን ወታደሮች በቀጥታ በዙፋን እንዲታዘዙ የሚያደርግ አዲስ ወታደራዊ ሥርዓት ለማምጣት ሞክረዋል። ግን አልሆነላቸውም። መኳንንት፣ ወታደሮችና ቤተክህነት ተባብረው በመዝመት በለጋ እድሜያቸው ቀጪዋቸው። ከተገደሉ በኋላ እንኳ ሰው አንስቶ እንዳይቀብራቸው አቡኑ ገዝቱ። እራሹ መደብ አዋጁን ተቀብሎት ነበርና ቂም እንዳይዘባቸው ፈርተው አቡኑና መኳንንቱ ዘድንግል የተገደሉት የካቶሊክ እምነት በመቀበላቸው ነው በማለት አመሃኙ።

የቀዳማዊ ኢያሱ መሬት ነክ ድንጋጌ ምን ይመስል እንደነበር አይታወቅም። ንጉሡ ከሞቱ ከሁለት መቶ ዓመት በኋላ የተጻፈ የዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ዜና መዋዕል እንዲህ ይላል፤ «ወራሪ ሁሉ አገሩን ከገራኝ ወዲህ ጉልበቱ እንደሰጠው ይዘት ነበርና ኢያሱ ምድረ ርስትን እንዳካፈለ...»(49) አረፍተ ነገሩ ድፍን ያለ ቢሆንም የኢያሱ አዋጅ ከርስቱ የተፈናቀለና የተሰደደ ገበሬ መሬት አግኝቶ አምራች እንዲሆን ለማድረግ የሞከረ ይመስላል።

የነዚህ ቀደምት ነገሥታት ሙከራዎችን በልብ በመያዝ ቴዎድሮስ በመስከረም 1856 አቡኑና ዋና ዋና የቤተክህነት አለቶች በተገኙበት ጉባኤ ስለ ግብር አስባስብና አጠቃቀም ውይይት ከፈቱ። የተደረገውን ክርክር ዘነብና ወልደማርያም በተለያየ መንገድ ዘግበውታል። የሁለቱም በማገናዘብ የምናገኘው ቴዎድሮስ የጉልት ሥርዓት አጥፍተው የመንግሥት ግምጃ ቤትን ለማደበር እርምጃ እንደወሰደ ነው። ወልደማርያም «ምድር በጂ ብለው ነበርና» ቢሉ ገበሬው ከርስቱ ተነቅሎ ነበር ማለት ሳይሆን ጉልተኛና ባለሪም የሆነው ከህንና ደብተራ ከገበሬ የሚሰበሰበው ወደ መንግሥት ግምጃ ቤት እንዲዘር መደረጉን ማሳየታቸው ነው። ጉልትን አስቀርተው፣ ግብር በቀጥታ በመሰብሰብ

ለሠራዊትና ለሌላ የመንግሥት አገልጋይ ደሞዝ ለመክፈል እንደሰቡ ወደጀቸውና አድናቂያቸው የነበረው የእንግሊዝ ቅንሰል ፕላውደን ጥሩ እድርጎ አብራርቶታል። ዘመናዊ ወታደራዊ አደራጃትን ለማስለመድ ጆምረው እንደነበርም ዘነብ በሠራተኛታ ይናገራሉ። ግን አልተሰከላቸውም። የጉንደር አድባራት እያንዳንዳቸው በሁለት ቴሶችና በሶስት ዲያቶች በመወሰናቸው እንደ አለቃ ፈንታ፤ የማገደረ ግርያም መምህር፤ የመሰሉ ባለቅኔዎች በሰምና ወርቅ ዘለፋዋቸው። እቡኑና መነኩሴዎች ንጉሡን በማውገዝ የሚከተሉዋቸውን ሁሉ ገዝቱ። በቀጥታ ለመንግሥት ግብር እንዲያስገባ የተጠየቀው ገበሬ በማድፈጡ የቴዎድሮስ ሠራዊት ቀለብ አጥቶ ተቸገረ።

የጉልት ሥርዓትን ለማፍረስ ያቀረቡት እቅድ የቤተክህነት ሙሉ ድጋፍ ባለማግኘቱ ዙፋኑን ለመልቀቅ እንደሚገደደ በጉባኤው ተናግረው ነበር። ግን እቡኑና አለቶቹ ቀስ በቀስ ሀሳባቸውን የሚለውጡ መስሏቸው በሥልጣን ለመቶየት ተስማሙ። ብዙቱ በየዕለቱ እየሠመረ የሚሄደውን ሠራዊታቸውንም ጦረኛ መሳፍንት በየእምባውና ዋሻው ደብቀውት የነበረውን በማካፈል ችግሩን በመጠኑ ለማስታገስ ችለዋል። ይህ ከሰቀ በኋላ ደግሞ ወታደሮቹን በተለያዩ አውራጃዎች በትነው በየገበሬው ቤት ሠሩዋቸው፤ አደላደሉዋቸው። ሆኖም የዘመነ መሳፍንት ወታደር መጥኖ መዝረፍን አያውቅም ነበርና ገበሬውን በጣም እንገላታው። ለዘመቻ በሚንቀሳቀሱበት ጊዜ ባላገር በወራሪ እንዳይጉደባቸው የተወሰነ ተከታይ ቢይዙም የሚደርሰው ጉዳት የሕሊና ጸጸት አበዛባቸው። ለምሳሌ ባንድ ዘመቻ የተራቡት ወታደሮች ለመዝረፍ እንዲፈቅዱላቸው ቢወተውቷቸው፤ «እህል ዘርፈህ ብላ። ልብስና ቁም አትንካ አሉት። ወታደርም ከብቱን ዘርፎ አረደው፤ ንጉሥ ቴዎድሮስም እጅግ ተቀጡ። እንዲህም አሉ ወታደር የድጋውን ገንዘብ እንደረድኸው ባንተም እግዚአብሔር አለህ አሉት።» እንዲሁም ባንድ አካባቢ የተሠሩ ወታደሮች ባላገሩን እስከመግደል በመድረሳቸው አቤት ቢል፤ «ወታደር ብላ ባላገር አብላ ያልሁ እኔ ነኝና ደመኛህ እኔን ግደል ባሉት ጊዜ። ባለደሙ እኔ ንጉሥ መግደል አይቻለኝም አለ። ንጉሡም ብዙ ብር ሰጥተው ሰደዱት።»

የጉልት ሥርዓት ለማስቀረት ባለመቻላቸው ግቦቻቸው እንደማይሠምሩላቸው በመገንዘባቸው ሞታቸውን የተመኙት እንደ ወይም ሁለቱ ብቻ አልነበረም። በቴዎድሮስ ስም ይዘውት የተነሱት

መጻሕፍት ውርስ ስለተበላሸባቸው መኖር አስጠላቸው። በፎገራና
ጌጌፍራሃ ወታደር ቀለብ ሲዘርፍ ብዙ ባላገር በመኖቱ፤ ወልደማርያም
ጌጌደጃፋት፤ «ፈጣሪዬ ምነው እንዲህ ታደርገኛለህ ወይ እኔን ቶሎ
ግደል ፍጥረትህ ይረፍ» ብለው አለቀሱ። ከሌላ ወረራ ጋር እያይዘው
ዘገብ እንዲህ ይላሉ፤ «ወደ ዘረፋ ልሂድ እያለ አስቸገረዎ ንጉሡ
ቴዎድሮስም በተበላው ጊዜ እንዲህ አሉ የመቅደሳ ሰዎች እስቲ
ምገራኝ አሉ ይህንን መንግሥት ትኔ ለመሄድ ሞከርሁት። ደግሞም
ፈጣሪዬን ፈራሁት። ገዛ ንደ ብዬ ብሰጥህ እምቢ አልህ ብሎ ይጣላኛል
ብዬ። ይህንም በተናገሩ ጊዜ አሁን እራት የሌለው ሰው ይኖራል
ብለው ሊያዘርፉ ሄዱ።» ለሕዝብ እረኛ ለሀገር ዘበኛ እሆናለሁ ብለው
ጭጭሩት ቴዎድሮስ ሰያስቡት ራሳቸውን አድቢ ተኩላ ሆነውባቸው
አገኙ። ዘድንግል በጊዜያቸው የተጠሉት ያህል ቴዎድሮስም ተጠሉ።

እንግሊዞች መቅደሳን እንደከበቡ ቴዎድሮስ መወረሻቸው
ጌጌደደረሰ በማወቅ ለጦር መሪው ለርበርት ናፒዬር የጻፉዋቸው ሁለት
ደብዳቤዎች እንደኩዘዜ ቃላት ሊታዩ ይቻላል። እንግሊዞች በሰነ
ሥርዓት የሚተዳደሩ ሕዝቦች ናቸው በማለት ዓላማዎቻቸው ሁሉ ለምን
ጌጌደከሸፋ ለማሰረዳት የጻፏቸው ቃላት ለኛም ሕይወታቸው ለምን
ጸፍተኛ ትራጀዲ እንደሆነ ይገልጽልናል። በሕዝብ ግንዛቤ ጉድለት
የዓላማዎቻቸው መከሸፍ ለሕዝብና ለሀገር እንደማይበጅ አይተው
ጌጌደኛው ደብዳቤ እንዲህ ይላሉ፤ «ያገራ ሰው ግብር ሥራት ግብ
ብቸብለው እምቢ ብሎ ተጣላኝ። እናንተ ግን በሰራት በተገዛ ሰው
አቸንፋችሁኝ።... ጌታነኝ መስሎኝ በልሰሳ መድፍ ሥታገል ውየ ነው።
ያገራ ሰው የፈረንጅ ሃይማኖት ይዞአል አስልሞአል እያሉ አሰሩን
ምገንያት ይሰጠኝ ነበረ። እኔ ከከፋሁበት እግዚአብሔር መልካም
ድሥጠው እንደወደደ ይሁን።» ሁለተኛው ደብዳቤያቸው ደግሞ
አመራራቸው ለምን ኃይልኛ ጭካኔ እንደበዘበትና ጥረታቸውም ሁሉ
ለምን ከንቱ እንደቀረ በነዚህ ጥቂት ቃላት ገልጸውታል፤ «ያገራ ሰው
ጸትእዛዝ መውጣቱን አይቸ ብገለው ብቀጣው አልመለሰልኝ ቢል
ጌጌደኝ ብቀና በገዛ ጠበንጀዬ እሞታለሁ ብዬ ሰይጣን አሣብ
አስደረብኝ።»

በጋፋት ያሰሩትን መድፍ ሰበሰቡጋል ብለው የሰየሙት ሩሲያውያን
ጌጌራይሚያ ጦርነት በቱርኮች ላይ የተቀደጀትን ድል እሳቸውም
ጌጌደጃፋት ላይ የሚደግሙት ስለመሰላቸው ነበር። ግን የተሸነፉት በልንቃ

ሕዝብ ተደናቅፈውና «ባልሰላ መድፍ» መቅደሳ ሰይ ተዋግተው ብቻ አልነበረም። ብሪታኒያና ሌሎች ምዕራባዊ የአውሮፓ አገሮች የሩሲያውን የሰባስቶፖል ድል ቱርኮችን በማገዝ እንደሚናገሩባቸው እነዚህ አገሮች ቴዎድሮስ በግብጽ ሰይ ድል እንደያገኙ አልፈሉም።

የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ በበኩሉ የቴዎድሮስን ሞት በጣም ተመኘ። እንደ ወታደር፤ «ፈጣሪውን ሲያማርር ንጉሡ በኋላው ደርሰው ቢሰሙት ለምን ፈጣሪህን ታማርረዋለህ ይህን ንጉሥ ገደልልኝ እንደርፍ ብለህ ለምነው እንጂ አሉት። እርሱም ሲመልስ ጀንሆይ አልሰማኝ እለ እንጂ እኔስ ሁለጊዜ ለመንሁት» እንደላቸው የሁሉም ይኸው ጸሎት ሆነ። እንደፈለገውም በ13 ሚያዚያ 1868 ለተከፋባቸው ሕዝብ ራሳቸውን አስወገደለት። ችግሩ ግን ተባባሰ እንጂ አብሮ አለተወገደለትም፤ የችግሩ ምክንያት እሳቸው አልነበሩምና። በቴዎድሮስ እቅዶች ተደክመው የነበሩ ጦረኛ መሳፍንት በተዘናጋው ሕዝብ በመጠቀም አንሰራሩ፤ ከደሮው በበለጠ ተጠናክረው ተነሱ። እንደቴዎድሮስ ለድሀ በማያዝኑና በማይራሩ መሳፍንት ሀገር ተጨነቀች፤ ሕዝብም መድረሻ አጣ። የቴዎድሮስ መነሳት አደናገጡዋቸው የነበሩት የውጭ ጠላቶች ይበልጥ ትምህርት ቀስመው በያቅጣጫው ብቅ ብቅ አሉ። የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ሌላ እውነተኛና የማይከሸፍበት ቴዎድሮስ የሚመጣበትን ቀን እንደገና መጠባበቅ ጀመረ። (50)

የግርጌ ግስታወሻ

- ፲ ፪ዚህ ጽሑፍ የተጠቀሱት ቀናቾች ሁሉም እንደ አውሮጳውያን እቅጣጠር ናቸው።

፪ላ ከሳ ልደትና አስተዳደግ ተክለጻድቅ መኩሪያ ዘርዘር ባለ ሙንገድ ያስረዳሉ። ዐፄ ቴዎድሮስ እና የኢትዮጵያ እንድነት (አዲስ አበባ፣ 1981 በኢትዮጵያ እቅጣጠር)፣ ገጾች 51-59። እንደሁም የኒህ ደራሲ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከዐፄ ቴዎድሮስ እስከ ቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴ (የተሻሻለ ዘመነኛ እትም፣ አዲስ አበባ)፣ ገጽ 1-2።

- ፲ እንደ ሰቪን ሩቢንሰን ትንተና ወለተ ተክሌ የማሩ የልጅ ልጅ ወይም እህት እንጂ ልጅ አልነበሩም። King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia (Addis Ababba, 1966), p.21 እንደ የዘመኑ ዜና መዋዕል የከንፋን እናት የማሩ እህት ያደርጋቸዋል። C.Conti Rossini, "Nuovi documenti per la storia d'Abissinia nel secolo XIX", Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, ser. VIII, vol .II (1947), p.374.

- ፱ ልዊጀ ፋሴላ ያስተሙት ያጤ ቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ (ሮማ፣ 1959)፣ ገጽ 1።

- ፳ Conti Rossini, "Nuovi documenti", p. 374.

- ፳፻ ፪ዘመነ መሰፍንት ጋብቻና ፍቺ ከጥሉ፣ እርቁና ክዳቱ ጋር በመጣመራቸው ስለዘመኑ የቤተሰብ ሁኔታ አስተማማኝ በሆነ ሙንገድ ለመጻፍ ያስቸግራል። የማሩ ሚስትና ደሪ ከንድ እናት ለመወለዳቸው ማስረጃው ጠንካራ ነው። በዚህ ጽሑፍ፣ ገጽ 369። የማሩ ሚስት ስማቸው ወለተ ተክሌ እንደነበርም እንደሁ ጠንካራ ማስረጃ አለ። ገብረሥላሴ፣ ታሪክ ዘመን ዘዳግማዊ ምኒልክ (አዲስ አበባ፣ 1959 በኢት.አቀ)፣ ገጽ 120። ከንፋ ያክስታቸውን ልጅ እያገቡም ነበርና ከኒህ ወለተ ተክሌ ጋር ምንም የሥጋ

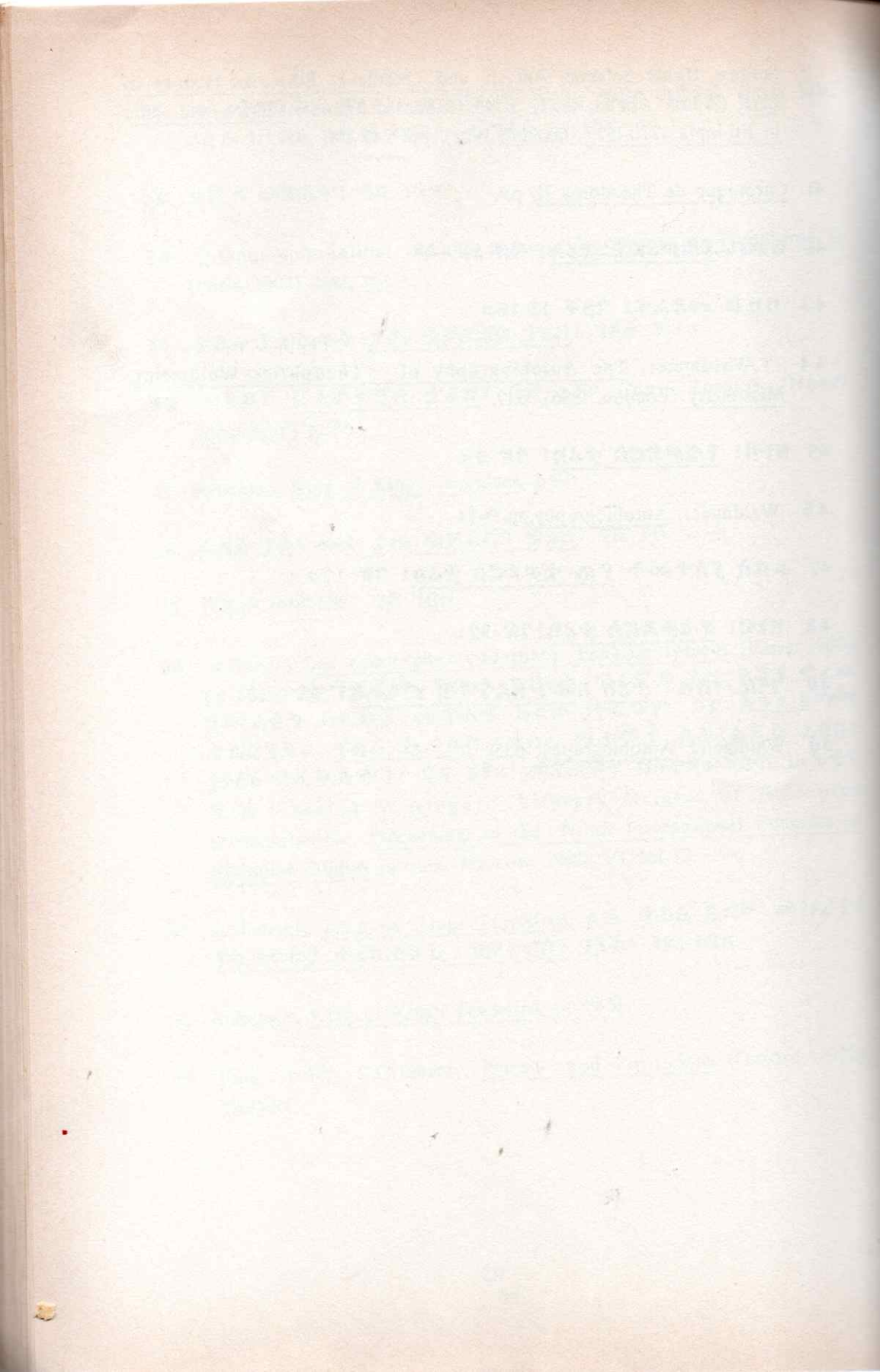
ዝምድና አልነበራቸውም ግለት ነው። እንዲሁም ተከለጻጽቶ መኩሪያ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከዐፄ ልብነድንግል እስከ ዐፄ ቴዎድሮስ (አምስተኛ እትም፣ አዲስ አበባ፣ 1965 በኢት.አ.ቀ.)፣ ገጽ 311-12።

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7. S. Rubenson, The Survival of Ethiopian Independence (London, 1976), pp. 45-67.
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14. Crawford, The Fung Kingdom, pp. 255-61.
- 15 Richard Hill, On the Frontiers of Islam (Oxford, 1970), fn. 4, p. 18.
- 16 Abir, "The Origins", pp. 447-49; Ethiopia. The Era of Princes, p. 97.

17. Hill, On the Frontiers of Islam, pp.15-19.
18. C.Conti Rossini, "La cronaca reale abissina dall' anno 1800 all' anno 1840", Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, ser. VII, vol. XXV (1916), p. 858.
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24. ዘነብ፣ የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ፣ አባታግ እና ሊትግን (ፕሪንስቶን፣ 1902)፣ ገጽ 10።
25. በዚህ መጽሐፍ፣ ገጽ 7።
26. በዚህ መጽሐፍ፣ ገጾች 8-9።
27. በዚህ መጽሐፍ፣ ገጽ 11።

- 28 ካለ ተዋበችን ያገቡት ከተሸሙና እርኪ ግብር ካሰገቡ በኋላ ነበር ይላሉ ዘነብ። በዚህ መጽሐፍ፣ ገጾች 11-12።
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- 30 C.Mondon-Vidailhet (ed.and trans.), Chronique de Theodoros II (Paris, 1904), text, p.2.
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- 32 ዘነብ፣ የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ፣ ገጽ 13። Conti Rossini, "Nuovi documenti", p.393.
- 33 Rubenson, King of Kings Tewodros, p.40
- 34 ፋሴላ ያሳተሙት ያጤ ቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ፣ ገጽ 5።
- 35 በዚህ መጽሐፍ፣ ገጽ 10።
- 36 R.Basset, Les apocryphes ethiopiens. Fekkare Iyasous (Paris, 1909), pp.25-26. እግርኛው የቤተ ክህነት ጣዕምና ለዘ እንዲኖረው በመረለግ በዚህች መጽሐፍ ካለው ትርጉም ጋር እንዲሰግግ ተደርጓል። ፍካራ ኢየሱስ (ተሰፋ ግተጊያ ቤት፣ እዲስ አበባ፣ 1966 በኢት.አቀ)፣ ገጽ 59። መጽሐፍዋ ስለተጻፈችበት ሁኔታና ጊዜ፣ Merid W.Aregay, "Literary Origins of Ethiopian Millenarianism", Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies (6 vols., Moscow, 1988), VI, 161-72.
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- 47 ፋሲስ ያስተመት ያጤ ቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ፡ ገጽ 12።
- 48 ዘነብ፡ የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ፡ ገጽ 32።
- 49 ገብረሥላሴ፡ ታሪክ ዘመን ዘደግግዊ ምኒልክ፡ ገጽ 123
- 50 Waldmeier, Autobiography, p.138.



The Kosso-Vendor Mother: A New Tradition of Origin

Taddesse Tamrat

The problem of progeny was always important in feudal Ethiopian society, especially to the ruling families. It often flared up in times of power struggle among rival personalities whose supporters spread malicious tales about the origins of their opponents. By the same token, they painted their own candidates in the brightest colours.

Since the 14th century, a central framework was devised in the *Kebra-Nagast* of which numerous versions have since been developed to accommodate the specific needs of regional leaders. The supreme example of how flexible this device has become over the generations can be seen from what is today the most popular version of the *Kibra Nagast* as related by most elders in Gojjam, for instance.

In its origins, the *Kibra-Nagast* sought to establish the exclusive right of the so-called "Solomonic" family to supreme power in the Christian kingdom. The major thrust of the document was thus aimed at the ruling family of the Zagwe Dynasty which was to be specially excluded from any power-sharing.¹ The popular versions of the *Kibra-Nagast* have, however, ended up by making these originally competing families descendants of two half-brothers. The technique used in doing this was quite simple, and it was based on the widely known romantic credentials of King Solomon who is made to sire two sons - Menelik and Zāga - in the same night, from the Queen of Sheba and her Lady-in-Waiting, respectively.

The Queen of Sheba may have paid too much for just a drop of water; but her Lady-in-Waiting secured a place for her offsprings in the popular saga of the *Kebra-Nagast* which despite its clear hostility in their regard at its beginning, has not only tended to legitimize the Zagwe but has also become the tradition of origin *par excellence* of their Agaw relatives in general.²

The device of the *Kebra-Nagast* seems to have been an attempt to give some order to what must have been an even greater chaos of claims and counter-claims being staged every time there was a transfer of power from one generation to another, the issue settled after a lot of bloodshed and fratricide. But the document never really created the ideal situation envisaged; and there were endless problems even during relatively more stable periods of Ethiopian history.

But a major factor in these endless problems was the proverbial promiscuity of the Ethiopian nobility which was observed by many travellers to Ethiopia.⁴ The

mundane rules of marriage and social conventions about matrimonial loyalty never applied to them. One of the earliest references we have to this common practice is in connection with the famous warrior-king Amda-Šiyon (1314-44). The monks of Dabra-Libanos excommunicated him for having married one of the women of his predecessor, Widim-Ra'ād, who was supposed to be his father. Amda-Šeyon tried to defend himself by saying "He is not my father; Widim-Ra'ād did not beget me". The biographer, who apparently had access to gossips at court, further elaborates the King's rather cryptic statement. He tells us that there were rumours that Widim-Ra'ād's queen and one of his brothers, Qidma-Sagada, had sideline relations of which Amda-Šeyon was the issue.⁵ Thus the progeny of one of the most important architects of medieval Ethiopia remains basically unsolved. His son, Sayfa Ar'ad, and practically all their descendants seemed to have used the Biblical King Solomon as their veritable model.

While the above refers particularly to the Central Court of the Christian Kings the situation was much more confused in the transmission of power at the local and regional levels, especially during the *Zamana-Masāfint*. The problem was rather puzzling because, while military prowess was always the most decisive factor in the assumption and retention of power, people continued to pay lip service to some popular notion of legitimacy. The end result of this basic dichotomy between legitimacy and military might was that, as an additional reinforcement of their positions, the powerful always had convenient genealogies tailored for them by the prolific *dabtarā* in their courts.

On the eve of Tewodros's advent to power, we have an interesting insight into the family relations of some of the leading personalities of the time. Arnould d'Abbadie lived with *Dejjazmač* Goshu Zewde (c.1772-1852) in what is today Gojjam Region for a number of months. Accepted as an honorary member of Goshu's household during his stay, he had very intimate access to the affairs of the family, and through it, to those of others. Of the massive notes he took, only three volumes have been published to date and they transmit an authentic picture of 19th century Ethiopian society.⁶

D'Abbadie's long passages on the institution of the family, marriage and current practices at the time reflect the basic problems cited in the preceding paragraphs.⁷ He tells us, for instance, although Goshu had only two legitimate children (Dori and Tassama), he had many other children, both sons and daughters. All his illegitimate sons served as ordinary soldiers in his huge feudal army; while the daughters were given out in marriage to promising young men who thus further reinforced their father's position.⁸ The famous Birru Goshu himself was born out of wedlock, and d'Abbadie describes the dramatic process of recognition of parenthood, some years before 1839.⁹ Another son, from an important lady in Yeju, was similarly recognized when he was already 23.¹⁰ It appears that the same might be applied to many of the contemporaries of Tewodros, even the mighty *Ras* Wube Hayla-Maryam of Simen and Tigray¹¹ and

the architect of modern Ethiopia Menelik II (1865-1913).¹² Having watched the general scene in this regard d'Abbadie formulated the following interesting principle of succession which seems to have been applied to those times:-

"Comme en Europe, au moyena âge, la paternité d'un chef de maison s'étend en quelque sorte sur tous ceux qui participant à sa fortune, et le vieux ou le bon serviteur, en maintes circonstances, prendra le pas même sur le fils aîné de la famille."¹³

It is within this framework that, I think, the malicious tales about the progeny of Tewodros, broadcast by his numerous enemies, should be understood. In the feudal terms of reference of the time, the more or less respectable origins of his father, *Dajach* Haylu Walda-Giyorgis, seem to have been generally accepted.¹⁴ It is his mother, *Wayzaro* Attiaggab, who has been maligned by almost all the contemporary accounts, with very few exceptions.¹⁵ The most outrageous tradition was collected by Dufton, from one of the followers of the rebel Agaw Niguse, who told the traveller:

"...She was in reality nothing more than a camp follower, and the only intimacy the chief ever had [with her] was when ... she would enter his tent to remove rubbish..."¹⁶

But it was mainly as a *Kosso*-vendor that the enemies of her son tried to humiliate this remarkable lady.

All the references known so far seem to attribute this status of *Kosso*-vendor to a later destitution, the most dramatic statement being made, characteristically, by Stern:

"She was, ere long, driven by want to eke out a miserable subsistence by the sale of *Kosso*."¹⁷

Even though Rubenson's "illiterate peasant of Dambiya"¹⁸ apparently a valuable informant, was kept nameless, the traditions he transmitted have enabled the author to give us what I think is still the best reconstruction of the early days of Kassa Tewodros.

Attiaggab was a respectable lady of Dambiya whom Kassa's father met with her retinue on the way. Conveniently, she was returning to her father from an earlier husband who had just divorced her while the bereaved Haylu himself was coming back from Begemdir where he had given up his beloved wife, Walata-Takle, to a more distinguished rival, an ally of Walata-Takle's powerful uncle, *Dajach* Maru.

Haylu and Attiṭaggab decided to marry and lived near Gondar where Kassa was born. Haylu apparently died quite early and the mother moved to Gondar where she brought up Kassa. Like all well-connected mothers, she must have had great ambitions for her son whom she probably sent to a respectable monastic school where the Christian elite always had their training for all kinds of leadership roles. A few years later, Attiṭaggab was impoverished¹⁹ and probably resorted to *Kosso* trade which is vehemently denied only by her country man, Garima Taffara.²⁰

The tradition that is here presented proposes a different origin for *Wayzaro* Attiṭaggab and gives the *Kosso*-vendor story another dimension.²¹

Our informant started by making an assertive statement that the origin of Tewodros was from Damot/Gojjam on his mother's side. She was born in Lijambra/Talya in Damot, a daughter of a very influential *balabbat*. She was exceptionally beautiful so much so that her parents called her *Attiṭaggab* [= "One who could never have enough of her!"]. Every family in the region with a son had plans for her; while her parents also hoped that she would one day bring them a good alliance with some distinguished family.

But, when she was old enough to marry, a saintly old monk received a strange revelation and told her father that if he let his daughter get married a serious disaster would befall his family and the country at large. The father kept the secret to himself and consistently refused to accept all marriage proposals that naturally came from every direction. Her mother could not understand this; and there was endless bickering between husband and wife on this issue. Poor Attiṭaggab, of course, had no choice in the matter and passively watched her less-gifted friends get married one after the other and the heyday of her own youth pass by.

Their house was located near a prosperous market-village which was visited by wealthy merchants operating on the old caravan route from Ennarya through Basso, Dambachā, Yaqumbāl, Gudārā and on to Gondar via Mechā. As a small child, Attiṭaggab sometimes accompanied her mother to the market place on market days. Later, when she was older, she was allowed to go there on her own and even to earn something for herself by selling *Kosso*, a medicament so essential for merchants always on the move.

Many a merchant was captivated by her exceptional beauty but the virtuous daughter of the influential *balabbat* was always serious and impregnable. One day a very wealthy merchant came to the market-village on his way to Gondar and Massawa and camped there for a few days. Some of his followers saw Attiṭaggab whose irresistible beauty and good manners they reported to their master. He approached the girl and proposed marriage. She told him that it was impossible

because her father would never allow it. Privately of course, she held a grudge on her tyrannical father and did not want this opportunity of getting married to such a rich merchant to slip away. When the man pressed her too much, she agreed to elope with him.

Meticulous arrangements were made to avoid their secret plans being discovered; and to minimize the dangers of the girl being captured by her influential *balabbat*. On the night of the elopement agreed upon, Attiaggab was to act normally; deposit the proceeds of her *Kosso* trade where her mother could get it on the morrow; leave the door of the house unfastened; and wait for her beau to come and snatch her away. To avoid suspicions of the rich merchant himself, he was to remain behind while Attiaggab would be taken by his loyal servants. Everything went as planned.

But hell broke loose the following day with her *balabbat* father using his strong local connections to look for his daughter. They searched every camp and scoured the whole countryside for a long distance in all directions. All was in vain. The merchant himself, now free from all suspicions, continued his travels to Gondar joining with his beloved Attiaggab on the way. He adored her all the more because he found her pure, with her virginity still intact. This was most unusual for a girl of her beauty and relatively advanced years; and he decided to keep her honour until the day he would formally marry her in Gondar when he returned from Massawa.

He had an old friend in Gondar, a highly respected lady with excellent contacts in the city and throughout the kingdom. He always stayed at her place whenever he went to Gondar. Now he took his bride-to-be, Attiaggab, to this lady; told her of their adventures and future plans, and left the girl in her custody until he would return from Massawa. In time, the lady loved the beautiful and well-behaved girl like her own children and Attiaggab soon became a shining star in this large Gondarine family. Her heart pined for her lover to return. But alas! No news from him. She waited for weeks, months and years. No one could tell them what had become of the good merchant!

But the venerable lady in Gondar had a jewel in her hands! She was well-known in town and her house, a popular meeting place for the dashing elite of Gondar and the unruly feudal hierarchy of the neighbouring provinces. Almost from the beginning Attiaggab attracted everybody's attention. At first, it was easy for her guardian to declare that the girl was betrothed and was waiting for the return of her fiancé. But this became less and less convincing as the years passed by.

One of the men with persistent interests in Attiaggab was *Dajjach* Haylu of Qwara. He asked for her hand on first sight: but the good lady put him off, successfully at first. He renewed his offers every time he came to see her; and

years passed by. The lady could no longer resist; and finally, she agreed to give the beautiful Attiṭagab in marriage to *Dajjach* Haylu who took her away to Qwara where their son Kassa was born.

Haylu died soon afterwards and his mother brought up Kassa very well on her own sending him to a proper school. She always told him of her *balabbat* father in Damot and that her ancestors were all rooted there. When he was old enough, Kassa entered the services of his half-brother *Dajjach* Kinfu who had succeeded their father. On one occasion, he was unhappy with Kinfu and decided to go back to his mother's native country Damot. There, he made contacts with his mother's influential relatives and entered the services of *Dajjach* Goshu Zawde. Goshu liked the resourceful, daring, young man and admitted him to the inner circle of his court where he had all his training in military strategy and political leadership.

I think the most crucial element in this story is Kassa's career in the court of *Dajjach* Goshu which is also cited in many contemporary accounts. What is not clear from these accounts is the exact period when he was in Goshu's service. Walda Maryam simply says that Kassa quarrelled with Kinfu and joined Goshu, then *Ras* Ali.²² The more elaborate account of the modern traditional historian, Garimā Tafara has Kassa go to Gojjam on two occasions. At first, in the lifetime of Kinfu with whom he quarreled, returning to Dambya on Kinfu's death. He fought on the side of Kinfu's children at the Battle of Mashanti (Qunzla) where Garima gives the exclusive Gojjame leadership to Birru Goshu. After Birru's victory, Kassa again goes to Gojjam and joins, this time clearly, Goshu's services.²³ The anonymous chronicler of Tewodros also attributes Kassa's flight to Gojjam to the same quarrel with Kinfu on whose death he returned for good.²⁴

Alaqa Zannab's account seems to me more likely, that Kassa joined Goshu after the disaster that befell Kinfu's family at the Battle of Qunzla,²⁵ on October 4, 1839. The choice of Goshu's court also makes sense because, according to d'Abbadie who accompanied the Gojjam troops then, the *Dajjāzmatch* was very protective of Kinfu's children and followers after their defeat.²⁶ In a way it is unfortunate that Kassa was in Goshu's court, precisely when d'Abbadie left it for a time to return only in 1842. The Battle of Angatta between Birru and his father Goshu was fought in his absence;²⁷ and if as Zannab says, Kassa had indeed distinguished himself on that Battle on Goshu's side, d'Abbadie would not have missed making acquaintances with him then and transmitting more traditions to us on Kassa's personal history. The claims put up on the Damoti origin of Tewodros in our story could have also been elucidated further.

Perhaps one of the most apt expressions that have gained wide circulation during the revolutionary era is *Yatārik Shimya*, "jostling for a place in history". This may have a number of manifestations. The most common and crudest method which has frustrated so many generations of students of Ethiopian history has been the practice of defacing the names of personalities and replacing them

with one's own in old Ethiopic manuscripts. Practically all the manuscripts in the major collections of France, Italy, and the United Kingdom have suffered intrusions of this type. Similar examples abound in the monastic libraries all over Ethiopia. What is most irritating is the extreme violence with which this was done: the earlier name being *completely obliterated* so much so that the tough texture of the parchment is often torn in the process.

Other manifestations of *Yatārik Shimya* are not acts of individuals as such; but rather results of a long common history for which different communities in time develop their own sense of belonging. The new versions of the *Kibra-Nagast* I referred to above and such apocryphal documents as *Dirsāna-Urā > el*²⁸ and many other traditions belong to this category. Despite the clear historiographical problems these may create, I consider them to be positive and integrative developments. I would like to see the new tradition presented above as just another example of the process of integration in the historical traditions of the Ethiopian people. As for *Wayzaro* later *Emmahoy Attiṭaggab*, however, it is better to conclude this paper with the following, apparently more authentic picture painted by her contemporary, Arnauld d'Abbadie:

"This good old lady was of great service to me; and, in 1848, despite the recent elevation of her son, she was still indulgent enough to rise up at my approach. They had already started to pay homage to her son as a person of authority.

Previously it was not like that; Kassa, hardly known as an obscure rebel, could only bring misery and contempt to his relatives. His beautiful mother, having seen the good old days of the flower of her youth vanishing, became a nun and wore a small white *qob* which is the special symbol of her new status. But she was without means; the property of the covents had long since been looted; and the more fortunate of her colleagues shunned the mother of a rebel... and since necessity is the mother of invention, the nun had to take up the most humiliating trade in the country, going to the market place to sell, for a few cents a dosage, the *Kosso* which the Ethiopians take six times a year to avoid the inconvenience of the tape-worm with which they are all infested."²⁹

NOTES

1. E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek* (Oxford, 1932), p.228; Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1570*, (Oxford, 1972), pp.64, 249-50.
2. Alaqa Taye, *Ya Itiyoppiya Hizb Tarik*, (Asmara, 1927), p.28; Tadesse Tamrat, "Processes of Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Agaw", *Journal of African History*, (1988), n.l.
3. Tadesse Tamrat, "Problems of Royal Succession in Fifteenth Century Ethiopia", *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici*, (Roma, 1974), pp.501-35.
4. For example: Alvarez, *The Prester John of the Indies*, (Cambridge, 1961), I, 104-8; Almeida, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, (London, 1954), pp.65-6.
5. C. Conti Rossini, ed., *Gadla Basalota-Milā>el*, CSCO, Vol. 28, t.11, 1905, p.29; Tadesse Tamrat, "Problems of Succession", p.504.
6. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la haute-Ethiopie (Abyssinie)*, ed. & ann. Jeanne-Marie Allier, (Vatican City, 1980).
7. *Ibid*, II, pp.145-56.
8. *Ibid*, I, pp.385-6.
9. *Ibid*, I, pp.386-7.
10. *Ibid*, II, p.156.
11. *Ibid*, II, p.59.
12. H. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II of Ethiopia 1844-1913*, (Oxford, 1975), pp.16-17.
13. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 385-6.
14. L. Fusella, *Yāte Tewodros Tārik* (Rome, 1959), p.1; G.Sapeto, *Etiopia*, (Roma, n.d.), p.300; H.A. Stern, *Wonderings Among the Falashas in Abyssinia* (London, 1862), p.63; G. Lejean, *Théodore II* (Paris, 1865), p.19; S. Rubenson, *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1966), p.16.
15. H. Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission*, (London, 1869), I, 278-9; H. Dufton, *Narrative of a Journey Through Abyssinia* (London, 1867), pp.112-3; G. Lejean, *op. cit.*, p.19; Garimā Tāffara, *Abbā Tāteq Kassa* (Addis Ababa, 1968), pp.19-22.
16. Dufton, *op. cit.*, p.113.
17. Stern, *op. cit.*, p.63.
18. Rubenson, *op. cit.*, p.27.
19. *Ibid*, p.31.
20. *Op. cit.*, p.20.

21. The tradition was narrated to me and my graduate students, Befecadu Begna, Tekeste Melak and Yassin Muhammad by *Qagnazmach* Dastā Mihretu of Finota-Salām during our recent research trip to Gojjam. A definitive text will be provided at a later occasion; but the version presented here is a result of our recollections and a comparison of the notes we took at the time.
22. *Mashāfa-Tārik Za-Tewodros King of Ethiopia (1873 E.C.)*, ed. & tr. Mondon-Vidailhet (Paris, 1904), p.1.
23. *Op. cit.*, pp.30-31.
24. Fusella, *op. cit.*, pp.2-3.
25. *Ya Tewodros Tārik*, ed. E. Littmann, (Princeton, 1902), p.6; Rubenson, *op. cit.*, p.34.
26. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, I, pp.432-70.
27. *Ibid.*, II, pp.107-8.
28. Caqot, A. "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Ouriel", *Annales d'Ethiopie*, (1955), I, 61-88.
29. Arnauld d'Abbadie, "L'Ethiopie e le roi Théodore" (Paris, 1868), p.23. The rendering of *qob* for the French "bonnet" is deliberate.

Téwodros as an Innovator

Richard Pankhurst

Any re-evaluation of Emperor Téwodros - and there will be many in the years ahead - must start, it may be argued, from a critical re-evaluation of the sources. Téwodros more than most Ethiopian rulers has suffered from a "bad press": from the fact that because of his sudden if heroic death at Mäqdäla - and the dispersal and destruction of most of his papers as a result of the looting of the citadel by the British¹ - he is seen, as far as contemporary records are concerned, very largely through the eyes of his enemies, foreign or native. The one-sided character of the documentation - particularly for the latter part of his life when he came into conflict with the British - inevitably poses historiographical problems - and helps to explain the widespread view of Téwodros, common for example among the well-informed in Britain, that the remarkable ruler whom so many Ethiopians regard as a pioneer unifier, reformer and modernizer, was no more than a "barbaric" and "mad" Emperor. The same process of historical distortion, I suspect, may be said to have occurred in the case of the so-called "Mad Mullah" of Shannan.²

Gunpowder-making

Téwodros, a man of war who had fought his way to power, was from the start of his career, deeply conscious of the need for innovation in the military field. This was historically necessary both for the reunification of the country and for the maintenance of its independence, at a time when the Egyptians were making major inroads in the frontier areas of the north-west. "His experience with the Egyptian troops on his northern frontier", wrote the English traveller Henry Salt, "convinced him that the primitive mode of warfare of his country would have to be superseded by the more modern one if he were to accomplish the splendid designs of his ambition"² With this objective in view Téwodros readily accepted an offer from Samuel Gobat, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, in 1855 to send him a group of missionary craftsmen from the Chischona Institute near Basel in Switzerland. They brought him gifts of religious books, but, as he later wrote to his English friend John Bell, he "would have been more pleased with some of English gunpowder than", as he said, "with books he already possessed."³ It is nonetheless worthy of note that Téwodros was the first ruler of Ethiopia to have had part of a Bible in Amharic - as opposed to Ge'ez - written for himself.⁴

Téwodros treated Gobat's missionaries kindly, and established them at Gafat, near his then capital, Däbrä Tabor. The first group of missionaries had included

two gunsmiths, but they died *en route*. In 1858, however, there arrived a French gunsmith called Bourgaud, and one Moritz Hall, a Polish Jew said to be a deserter from the Russian army.⁵

Téwodros, whose power base lay in the north-west of Ethiopia, where it was extremely difficult to import cannon, was deeply conscious of the need to manufacture such weapons in the country. He seized the opportunity of attempting to do so in 1861 when a French metal-caster called Jaquin declared his willingness to make a mortar if assisted by the other craftsmen at Gafat. The result, as the Swiss missionary Theophilus Waldmeier later reported, was that:

"the king wrote us a letter ordering us to stand by Jaquin in every way, to support him with advice and action, and to serve him as translators. We made no objection to this for we had been recommended as people who possessed technical skill and who were ready to help with anything required. The work was therefore undertaken, and a blast furnace was built and a bellows installed. The iron was carried on the back of loyal servants from far away. After much time and many efforts the day for pouring arrived. A great crowd stood around the furnace awaiting the happy result while the others worked the bellows with great speed hoping for a great reward from the king... M. Jaquin soon noticed that the work had failed, for the furnace, which was made of poor material, had melted before the iron reached melting-point. The Frenchman began to lament and weep; he went half-mad, cried wildly, and finally asked the King's permission to leave"

Not long after the Frenchman's departure Téwodros, Waldmeier continues, "came to Gafat and swore by his death that we should not abandon Jaquin's work, but go on trying. We replied, 'Your Majesty, we have neither the knowledge nor experience in this matter, and are quite ignorant of it, and we are afraid to undertake what is above our strength.' 'That does not matter', answered the King, 'if you are my friends try. If God allows it to succeed, it will be well; if not, it will be well'". To underline his insistence on the missionaries' cooperation, however, he arrested their servants.

Waldmeier and his colleagues, however, continued to argue that they were "incapable of establishing a blast furnace"; but were "willing to undertake any other work to which they were equal". Téwodros, who showed himself much displeased at this, replied by asking the visitors to make a cart, but later in an effort to overcome the royal displeasure Waldmeier made a gunstock, whereupon the monarch expressed himself delighted, and at once released the missionaries' imprisoned servants. He then again asked their masters to devote their attention to making a blast-furnace. At about this time Moritz Hall succeeded in casting a

small mortar and some bullets. "When the King saw this", Waldmeier reports, "he smiled with happiness and thanked God, but he was not fully satisfied, for the mortar was too small for him, so he gave Moritz orders to cast a bigger one... Herr Moritz said, 'I am unable to undertake such a work, but if the Europeans at Gafat help me I hope to be able to oblige Your Majesty'. 'Good', replied the king, 'Waldmeier and all the Europeans shall be at your disposal'".

Theodore then ordered Waldmeier and his comrades to help the project in any way. "I could not oppose this", the missionary recalls, "for I had good reason not to arouse the King's wrath". The missionaries accordingly set to work, but Waldmeier continues, "Herr Moritz, the caster was at a loss of what to do, and he was made us unhappy. We were in great difficulty and were helpless *vis-à-vis* the King who sent us letter after letter asking us whether our work had succeeded. Time and time again we were obliged to give a negative answer, but the King's patience was greater than ours; he comforted us and sent us word: 'Begin again from the beginning'. This we did, but in vain."

The workers at Gafat nevertheless continued to persevere. "After unspeakable effort", reports Waldmeier:

"We made a final despairing effort... and behold, for the first time we were successful. All the Abyssinians of the area, who had for a long time looked at our work, came to share our joy and to congratulate us. We ourselves, together with our new brothers, were glad, for we, as well as they, could now count on a good reception on the part of the King... The King was well pleased beyond all measure with our little piece of metal, kissed it and cried, 'Now I am convinced that it is possible to make everything in Habbesh. Now the art has been discovered God at last has revealed Himself. Praise and thanks be to Him for it'. The King then asked us what, apart from his crown and throne, would we like to have from him. 'Your Majesty', we answered, 'we wish for nothing but to remain in constant possession of your love and friendship.' He replied, 'I will give you my love and friendship, and, in addition, each one of you shall have 1,000 dollars and provisions for your household'".

Soon afterwards he asked the missionaries to make a larger gun, and, Waldmeier duly notes: "We cast a bigger mortar with which all the Abyssinians were very pleased".⁶

Gun-making then proceeded apace, and when the British traveller Henry Salt visited the country in 1862-3 he found that all the Europeans were engaged in the manufacture of cannon and mortars, while their Ethiopian assistants and trainees were "beginning to profit" from the work. The craftsmen, he wrote, soon afterwards:

"produced a small mortar, which, considering the manner in which it was made, was a marvel. The metal was melted in some thirty crucibles, on fires in the ground, blown by hand-bellows of the most primitive description - consisting of a leather bag, the mouth of which is opened on being drawn up for the receipt of air, and closed again when the air is to be driven by pressure through the clay tube conducting to the fire... every encouragement is given by the king to his people in their endeavours to perfect themselves in the manufacture of these implements, for he is fully aware that this is the best way for him to secure his independence of other nations"

Téwodros, an innovator in this as in other matters, "also contemplated" sending a batch of Ethiopians to England and France "for the purpose of learning useful trade", as Dufton reports.⁷

Téwodros made use of missionary craftsmen, it should be noted, because he had scarcely any other source of skilled manpower. He was, however, constantly trying to import other workers, as well as fire-arms, from abroad. In October 1862, for example he spoke to British Consul Cameron of his desire to purchase weapons from England, and Cameron subsequently reported to London that the most acceptable presents for the monarch would include mortars, rockets, small cannon, grenades, fire-arms and ammunition. Such hints were, however, largely ignored by the British Foreign Office. The ruler, later, in January 1864, sent Martin Flad, one of his missionary craftsmen to England, in an unsuccessful attempt to engage gunsmiths and other artisans. Later again we find Téwodros attempting to obtain skilled artisans through the assistance of the British Envoy Hormuzd Rassam who recorded, in April 1866, that the Emperor had sent him a note declaring,

"My desire is that you should send to Her Majesty, the Queen, and obtain for me a man who can make cannons and muskets, and one who can smelt iron; also an instructor of artillery. I want these people to come here with their implements and everything necessary for their work, and then they shall teach us and return"⁸

Téwodros's tragedy resulted in large measure from the fact that the British Government failed to heed these requests.

Téwodros meanwhile was redoubling his efforts, and demands, for the local manufacture of weapons. Waldmeier reports that in 1863 Moritz Hall and the missionaries cast a large mortar which, however, only whetted the royal appetite

labours. The labours of the gunsmiths were therefore again intensified. Writing of 1868 Waldmeier observes:

"We had to work like slaves night and day under the orders of the King who had set up his camp at Gafat. The King wanted work from us which was beyond our skill and power. He wanted us to cast 30 pounders, 7 feet long. We could not oppose the constantly irritated King, for the least thing drove him to such fury that he could easily have attacked us and the prisoners. We undertook the work trembling, but after the second attempt we succeeded"

Waldmeier, whose relations with the Ethiopian ruler had by then deteriorated, wrote that towards the end of the year Téwodros:

"ordered us to cast a mortar from which a 1,000 pound cannon-ball could be fired. We were afraid to refuse and we were afraid to obey, but God did not abandon us in this hour of need... The Lord helped us by letting our work succeed... The King wanted to put us all in chains and throw us into prison, but because we were busy making this great gun, he was prevented from doing us harm, for he wished to satisfy his boundless pride through this colossal work for which he needed white slaves".⁹

The making of guns strained Téwodros's resources to the utmost. Chronicler ~~Waldmeier~~ Maryam recalls that brass was collected from all parts of the country to be melted down, together with 30 vases from Mäqdäla, after which "the Negus manufactured a cannon, which they called Bomba, of such a size as had never been seen in Ethiopia before. A man could get into it and come out again the other end". This weapon, which was later christened Sebastapol after the famous battle in the Crimean war, is said to have weighed seven tons, and, according to ~~Waldmeier~~, required as many as 500 people to pull it uphill. "It was unquestionably a wonderful piece of ordnance for its size", the envoy commented, "and more wonderful still as the workmanship of His Majesty's European artisans who had no experience of casting cannon". Téwodros later said to him that the day of its casting was one of the happiest of his life.¹⁰

By such means Téwodros succeeded in building up the first significant arsenal of artillery in Ethiopian history. At Mäqdäla, Clements Markham, the British geographer-cum-historian reports, the Ethiopian ruler had 24 brass cannon, four iron cannon and nine brass mortars, the latter all made in Ethiopia "some with inscriptions in Amharic".¹¹

If this was, in a sense, Ethiopia's first industrial Revolution, it was aborted by the British, who after their victory at Mäqdäla, destroyed all the Ethiopian guns which had been cast with such difficulty - and with the death of Téwodros the drive to produce such weapons in the country was abandoned.

(Téwodros's detention of the British captives had led to his downfall - but it should not be forgotten that this policy almost succeeded. The arrest of the envoys not only obliged the British Government to reply to his letter to Queen Victoria, which that government had so long chosen to ignore, but no less importantly forced it to recruit the craftsmen which it had long been unwilling to do, and caused it actually to ship them as far as Massawa. It was only at that late point that Téwodros overplayed his hand by declaring that he would not release his prisoners until the arrival of the craftsmen at his camp.)¹²

Towards a Paid Army and the End of Looting

Téwodros was also much concerned with the need to reform the Ethiopian army, by establishing trained, disciplined and salaried troops in place of the hordes of disorderly men who had for so long lived by looting the countryside. His ambition to achieve this important reform, and his early achievements in this field, were chronicled by British Consul Walter Plowden who reported in July 1853 - two years before the monarch's coronation - that the Ethiopian ruler had, with the assistance of some Turks, "in a degree disciplined his army". In a subsequent report, of June 1855, the same observer noted that Téwodros had adapted the practice of giving his soldiers "sums of money from time to time", thereby accustoming them to his intention of establishing regular pay". He ordered them at the same time to purchase their food, and to cease harassing the peasants. To implement these policies, granaries were set up, according to the German traveller Heuglin, at several places, most notably at Däbrä Tabor and Mäqdäla.¹³ The prohibition on looting was described by both Plowden and the British traveller Charles Beke as a "great reform", but was by no means easy to enforce. Zänäb, an Ethiopian chronicler of the time, relates for example that Téwodros when in Dälanta in 1856 found it necessary to tell his followers to take what they wanted to eat, i.e. corn, but to touch neither cattle nor clothing. The men nevertheless seized and slaughtered all the livestock they could find, whereupon, Téwodros was very angry, and cursed them exclaiming, "Soldiers, as you have butchered what belongs to the poor, so will God do unto you!"¹⁴

The political and military difficulties of the time rendered Téwodros's attempt to institute a regular paid army impracticable, and it proved in fact almost impossible to prevent his regular troops from looting the countryside. The Protestant missionary Henry Stern, describing the fear and suspicion with which he says Téwodros's army was regarded, wrote:

"Our detachment of troops, the most renowned in the army for daring deeds and gallant achievements... were, to judge from the anxious looks and terrified countenances which greeted our arrival, not much courted when they approached one of their native settlements. The poor peasants, who dreaded to receive a dozen of these hungry heroes for guests, were in an ecstasy of delight when they saw them saluting their chief, and cantering across the plain towards neighbouring villages."

The troops' departure brought an end, he comments, to "the fear of an impending famine, which a night's sojourn of our troops might have brought upon the small settlement."¹⁵

Rassam, writing in 1866, nevertheless significantly reported that it was "most cheering" to see "how well" the monarch protected the crops of his faithful subjects which he did by "ordering different parties under officers to guard the corn-fields against the ravages of the soldiery".¹⁶ Such concern did not of course extend to areas inhabited by rebels where Téwodros wrought fearful destruction.¹⁷

Pacification

One of the consequences of the long civil war and constant fighting of the *zāmānā mäsafent*, or Era of the Princes (or Judges), was the tradition of warfare and feuding, and the existence of excessively large numbers of soldiers who roamed the countryside, as well as the presence in many areas of numerous outlaws and bandits. Téwodros, the innovator here too, seems to have sought to ameliorate the lot of the people by introducing a policy of general pacification.

Early in his reign, according to the French envoy Lejean, he issued an edict, in August 1855, that "every one should return to his lawful avocation, the merchant to his store, and the farmer to his plough". This decree, Plowden states, "was intended as a reassurance to the country, till then so distracted by civil war, that the primary aim of its ruler was imperatively directed towards the establishment of peace and prosperity throughout the realm"¹⁸

Téwodros also took resolute action to uproot banditry, and, according to Lejean, did so with "draconian severity". He relates that the people of Tisba, who were incorrigible bandits, once came to the ruler armed to the teeth, asking him to confirm their right, which they claimed had been recognized by David the Great, to be allowed to exercise the profession of their fathers. "What is their profession?", asked Téwodros without suspicion. "Highway robbery", they insolently replied. "Listen", he declared, "your profession is dangerous, and agriculture is more profitable. Go down to the plain and cultivate it. It is the most beautiful in the empire. I will myself give you oxen and ploughs". The men of Tisba proving

obdurate he dismissed them, giving them a later appointment at which they were suddenly, and without warning, put to death. Such severity, according to Lejean, achieved its result. The roads then blood-stained by brigandage and civil war, became, he says, as safe as those of France or Germany. "An inhabitant of Jenda said to me... that before Theodore this village did not count a single market-day which was not followed by a murder: under the new reign not a single murder had taken place in the village or its surroundings". This picture is corroborated by Dufton who observed that Téwodros did his best to open the caravan routes which had been closed by war, and dealt mercilessly with the bandits and highway robbers, whose ravages... had tended to make the roads unsafe".¹⁹

Opening of trade routes

Further to assist trade Téwodros, as Plowden noted in June 1855, "put an end to the vexatious number of internal customs posts that had hampered commerce, and ordered that duties should be levied "at only three places in his dominions".²⁰ This is confirmed by Dufton who observed that the monarch "simplified the regulations regarding commerce and customs dues"²¹

The reform was, however, short-lived, and, as E.A. De Cosson, a subsequent British traveller, discovered, was "discontinued at Theodorus's death".²²

Road-building

Téwodros can be seen as an innovator also in the field of road-building which until his time had been rare in Ethiopian history. His motivation, like that of many great road-builders in other lands, was primarily military, and sprang from his need to move his troops - and cannon - quickly from one part of the country to another. An early glimpse of his activity as a road-builder is afforded by Consul Plowden, who in a report of March 1859, noted that the Ethiopian ruler was then employing some Europeans in road-making, and paid them "handsomely for their work" as he said that he "could only succeed in conquering all his foes by making wide roads, that he may pass with his army rapidly from one point to another". The consul went on to state that by working at the roads with his own hands Téwodros had overcome his men's traditional dislike of labour, and had shown himself "delighted with the operation of blasting".²³

Not long after this Téwodros, with the help of the Protestant workmen's mission, began the construction of Ethiopia's first embryonic road network, to link Däbrä Tabor with Gondär, Gojjam and Mäqdäla. The craftsmen, with Téwodros's approval, at about this time also constructed a carriage to travel on these roads - one of the first such vehicles ever seen in the land.²⁴

Téwodros's courage and determination as a road-builder in the last months of his reign, when he was engaged in transporting his cannon from Däbrä Tabor in Mäqdälä, was later described by Henry Blanc, one of his British captives, who wrote:

"From early dawn to late at night Theodore was himself at work; with his own hands he removed stones, levelled the ground, or helped to fill up small ravines. No one could leave as long as he was there himself; no one would think of eating, drinking, or of rest, while the Emperor showed the example and shared the hardships".

Describing the country traversed by the road in the vicinity of Mäqdälä, Blanc adds: "The work now before him would have driven any other man to despair... He went, however, steadily to work. Little by little he made a road, creditable to a European engineer".²⁵

The immensity of the work likewise impressed members of the later British expeditionary force. Captain H.M. Hozier described Téwodros's road to Mäqdälä as "a grand feat of rude engineering", and adds: "rocks had been hurled aside or blasted through, at an immense expense of labour and of time".²⁶ Markham agrees that the road was:

"a most remarkable work - a monument of dogged and unconquerable resolution. Rocks were blasted, trees sawn down, revetment walls of loose stones mixed with earth and branches built up, and everywhere a strengthened hedge of branches at the outer sides to prevent the earthwork from slipping. The details of blasting and riveting were of course done under the direction of his German artisans; but the King himself was the chief engineer, who selected the trace and organized the labour. At one or two points several trial traces were marked out, before the final one was adopted... from early dawn until dark the Europeans were obliged to be in attendance on this extraordinary man, whose resolute determination to overcome all obstacles never failed him... Well might Mr Flad [one of the craftsmen missionaries] exclaim 'He has indeed an iron perseverance!'"²⁷

Alexander Shepherd, a reporter for the *Times of India*, took a similar view, observing that the road "bore witness to the perseverance and pains-taking efforts of its maker", for though the gradient was, he thought, sometimes too steep:

"Theodore's road was altogether a kingly structure; its august engineer had scorned to adopt the little devices in vogue among the profession of overcoming or avoiding whatever difficulties unkind nature had placed in his way. If rocks could be rolled aside bodily, they had been so rolled aside; if otherwise, they had been cut asunder at an immense sacrifice of time, labour, and powder; but in no instance had they been allowed to interfere with the symmetry of the king's highway. So with hills and every other species of let or hindrance".²⁸

A Boat on Lake Tana

Téwodros's innovative mind also found expression, albeit abortive, in an attempt to establish a fleet on Lake Tana. Blanc, who describes this remarkable initiative, comments that "there was no doubt that his majesty had made up his mind to have a small navy". To this end he asked the European craftsmen at his court to start boat-building, but they replied, as they had done in the question of casting of the cannon, that they lacked the necessary skills though they were willing to learn under experts. Notwithstanding this refusal, Waldmeier and another missionary artisan, Saalmuller, subsequently made a raft. Téwodros also asked Rassam about boat-building, but the latter, according to Stern, "shirked the question" by pleading ignorance.²⁹

Téwodros was, however, not to be dissuaded by such replies. "Seeing that everybody seemed reluctant to help him", writes Blanc, "he went to work himself; he made an immense flat-bottomed bulrush boat of great thickness, and to propel it made two large wheels worked by hand: in fact he had invented a paddle steamer, only the locomotive agent was deficient".³⁰ Rassam, who has also left an account of this attempt at boat-building, states that for nearly a month, in April 1866, Téwodros was:

"engaged in building what he called an imitation of a steamer. Two large boats, sixty feet long and twenty feet wide midships, with wooden decks, and a couple of wheels affixed to the sides of each, to be turned by a handle like that attached to a common grindstone, were accordingly constructed; but although nearly a hundred men were taken on board, the wheels were only immersed about four inches. The day they were launched, he invited the members of the Mission to witness the experiment, and the vessel in which he had embarked moved so rapidly after the bulrushes had got well soaked, which made it subside deeper into the water, that he seemed frantic with joy, whilst the natives looked on with admiring wonder. He did not take us with him on this trial trip, because, as he sent to tell us, he feared the boat might sink so deep that we should get wet. He proceeded to try how the vessel would behave

against the wind, and on rounding the peninsula encountered a strong breeze, which soon convinced him of the futility of his attempt. The incongruous material of which the boat was constructed, one elastic and the other the opposite - no effort having been made to ensure an equal pressure upon them from without - began to give way after a little tossing, and his Majesty deemed it prudent to return as speedily as possible to the smooth water of the bay".

This, Rassam notes, was the end of Téwodros's attempt at building a navy³¹ - which was scarcely surprising as he was soon to face a major land invasion which was to lead to his death.

Opposition to Slave Trade

Téwodros was throughout his life a strong opponent of the slave trade. Rowden reported in 1854 - a year before his hero's coronation - that the future monarch had written to him, stating that he had forbidden the export of slaves on pain of severe punishment.³² On coming to power Téwodros again declared the trade illegal - but, like later rulers who followed in his footsteps, was in no position to enforce his anti-slavery decrees.

Realizing the impossibility of achieving complete abolition he permitted ~~selling~~ slaves to be sold to Christians provided that they purchased them for ~~slavery~~, and himself set an example by paying the Muslim dealers for slaves which he then baptized. Later, however, he seems to have had second thoughts as to the wisdom of this policy, and informed Consul Cameron of his intention to "stop the trade effectively - not as a concession to us, but because he hated it himself".³³ The Emperor subsequently ordered the amputation of the right hand and left foot of anyone found guilty of selling Christian slaves. The sincerity of his anti-slavery credentials was fully accepted by the missionary Waldmeier who recalls that Téwodros wrote to him, sending him freed slaves, and saying "Teach these young boys arts and religion,... and I will pay all their expenses".³⁴ His opposition to the enslavement and sale of slaves, was based on the *Fethä Nägäst*, or traditional Ethiopian code of law, and was therefore concerned only with Christians - moreover it did not prevent his men while on campaign from capturing many "pagans".³⁵

Unsuccessful Land Reform

Téwodros must also be remembered as a would-be land reformer.

On gaining control of Šāwa he at once endeavoured to reform its land system by strengthening rights of tenure. He accordingly issued a proclamation, chronicler Wäldä Maryam states, in February 1857, designed to institute private property in the province. He decreed that land should belong to those whose fathers had already held it as fiefs and that persons with such claims should look to him as their father. Though this edict was universally acclaimed we are told that after its promulgation there was no one in Šāwa who did not claim land or pretend that this or that piece of land belonged to his father. There were in consequence so many land disputes that Téwodros was obliged to issue a new decree establishing the old institutions.³⁶

Some of the priests, learning of his above-mentioned decree, also clamoured for a share in the land distribution. Däbtära Zänāb states that in September 1857 they asked to be allowed the lands they had possessed in the time of the emperors, prior to the *zāmānā masafent*, but the monarch was unsympathetic. "What shall I eat and give to my soldiers", he is supposed to have said. "You have taken all the lands calling them 'lands of the Cross!'" In the ensuing discussion a priest insolently declared that Téwodros should follow the time-honoured practice of marching from place to place in order to spread the burden of his court and army over the whole empire. "Remain four months", he said "and eat up Armāččāho, Šägädé, Wälqayt and Tegré, then establish yourself at Aringo, and eat up Bägémder, Lasta, Yäjjū, Wärrä Himano, Wällo and Šāwa, and then make your residence at Yebaba, to eat up Mečča, Agāw Meder, Damot and Gojjam as was done in the past". Téwodros, however, was not amused, and cried out, "You effeminate one, if you found me alone, you would kill me with your muslin turban as was done to Emperor Iyasu!" A fierce dispute then broke out between the Emperor and his soldiers, on the one side, and the *Abun*, or head of the church, and the priest on the other.³⁷

Téwodros likewise made some changes in land tenure in the north of the country where he restored certain lands in Akkälä Guzay which had earlier been given by Däjazmač Webé to personalities in Serayé, and also established hereditary ownership of land in the former district.³⁸

Perhaps the most important of Téwodros's proposed land reforms, however, was in relation to church property. The extent of the church land-holding was, as his bitter critic the missionary Stern put it, "a great eyesore" to the monarch, who, "anxious to appropriate these extensive possessions for his own use... artfully promised to provide for the wants of the clergy, while depriving them of their land". This proposal was predictably opposed by the clergy, whose objections so angered him that, Stern claims, "he would have probably evoked the sword to decide the quarrel, but his faithful followers reminded him that the troops and the nation were with the priests, and that serious consequences might ensue if he provoked their superstition and bigotry". The result was that the storm abated, and Téwodros, "convinced of the unreasonableness of a conflict that might, at the

very outset of his reign, convulse the whole realm to its very centre, yielded to the dissensions of his friends, and the church spoliation plan was suspended till 1860, when it was carried into effect". Blanc, who also tells of the Emperor's appropriation of church land, claims that Téwodros "could not tolerate any power in the State but his own", and that when he judged the time favourable he "confiscated all the Church belongings and revenues", including some of the church's own property. An anonymous Amharic document of the time asserts that all land belonging to ecclesiastical establishments was confiscated, and that the number of priests attached to a church was limited to five, or seven in the case of the more important ones. Téwodros, the text claims, disliked monks and above all *abdayas*, or lay clerics, complaining that they "wore turbans on their heads and neither fought nor paid taxes", preferring to "live in cities with prostitutes or other people's wives".³⁹

Téwodros's attack on church property not surprisingly produced considerable discontent on the part of the clergy. Stern writing, it will be recalled, as a critic, notes that the latter were "not so easily gulled" by the Emperor's offer to look after their material needs while taking their lands, and "all unanimously declared that they would not be slaves dependent on the royal bounty". Blanc reports that the Abbot's anger at this time "knew no bounds", while Dufton says that the Emperor's action "aroused the inveterate enmity of the sacerdotal caste", though his kindness to poor priests "proved that he was not conspiring against the religion of the land, and justified the act of spoliation in the eyes of the people, while the increased revenues thus obtained helped him to support his numerous soldiery, and to carry out those other measures for the improvement of the country which he had instituted, he himself living in the simplest and unkingly manner possible".⁴⁰

Opposition from the priesthood nonetheless seems to have contributed significantly to Téwodros's troubles and ultimate fall. His defeat by the British, and subsequent suicide, brought an end to these attempted reforms, for *Wagšum Gabriel* (later King of Kings *Täklä Giyorgis*), the ruler of Amhara, proved his zeal for the Orthodox faith, according to French historian Georges Douin, by at once declaring the restoration to the Church of its former lands.⁴¹

Other Reforms

Téwodros, during his short reign, also attempted a number of other reforms. He sought to encourage more stable marriages⁴², and more respectable clothing⁴³, to abolish the old sumptuary laws which had restricted certain clothing to the nobility, and to use dress as a way of distinguishing and honouring his own officials.

He also began to "substitute letters" for "verbal messages"⁴⁵ and, encouraging the use of Amharic, having as we have seen, a volume of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark written for himself in this language.⁴⁶

He also collected a great library of ecclesiastical manuscripts, the finest such collection ever assembled. These volumes were housed in the compound of the church of Mädhane Aläm which he had earlier erected⁴⁷, and from which they were subsequently looted by the Napier expedition.

Gondär and Mäqdäla

One of the most important decisions taken by Téwodros, at the very beginning of his reign, was his decision to establish himself at Ras Ali Alula's capital, Däbrä Tabor (which he subsequently abandoned in favour of the mountain fortress of Mäqdäla). Téwodros's successive use of these two capitals - and his attacks on the city of Gondär on two separate occasions in the 1860s - finally sealed the fate of the old metropolis, which unable to survive the decline of centralised power in the *zämäna mäsaferä*, had been declining for a little over a century. Gondär, which in Téwodros's time thus lost its status as an empire-wide capital, thus lost most of what was left of its old political, commercial and religious importance, and was abandoned by many of its churchmen - including the *Abun*, as well as not a few of its traders and craftsmen.⁴⁸

Téwodros in the General Perspective of Ethiopian History

If we look at Ethiopia in the Middle Ages we see that though urbanization was little developed⁴⁹ and coined money was not in use, the country was in many ways comparable to that of medieval Europe.

The coming of fire-arms in the early sixteenth century, however, produced a great transformation (at least in the military field), forcing Ethiopia into a backward situation in a world in which power sprang from the barrel of a gun.

The rulers of medieval and post-medieval Ethiopia in their attitude to technology were primarily concerned with the need to import fire-arms. (To a lesser extent they were, however, also interested in obtaining foreign help in the provision of medicines, mainly for themselves and their court, as well as in the building of palaces and royal churches.⁵⁰ Apart from these three things (fire-arms, medicine, and palace and related buildings) Ethiopia was largely self-sufficient - or relied on ordinary trade for its few essential imports.

* Extempore remarks made at the symposium.

In the centuries which followed, two major developments occurred. Firstly, Ethiopia entered the period of the *zāmānā mäsafent*, i.e. the era of the judges (or princes), a time of disunity and civil war in which trade declined, agriculture stagnated and Ethiopia's civilization regressed.

Secondly, Western Europe underwent the Industrial, Agricultural and Commercial Revolutions. Up to that time Ethiopia had been comparable (at least up to a point!) with Europe, but now, like most of the world, the country had become technologically backward in comparison with the industrial countries of western Europe. One of the consequences of this was that Ethiopia's borderlands were gradually but remorselessly being overrun.

The historical imperative for Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century was therefore to develop technologically - to catch up with Europe, or at least follow its path of development. Egypt began to do just that in the first part of the nineteenth century, under its pioneering innovator Muhammad Ali.

Ethiopia, because of its geographical position in the world, should have followed suite at about the same time - but this was prevented by the realities of the era of the *zāmānā mäsafent*.

Ethiopia therefore had need of a Téwodros.

Conclusion:

Téwodros, we may conclude, was like other historical personalities, unquestionably a man of his time and his country - his very choice of name demonstrates his link with Ethiopia's millenarian movements,⁵¹ and precedents for at least some of his reforming notions are to be found among a number of his predecessors, notably Däjazmač Webé. Téwodros as a totality nevertheless stands out as something different and special - a giant in Ethiopia's age-old history. His uniqueness - and his reforming role and aspirations - would seem undeniable. This was recognized early in his career by his friend Walter Plowden when he reported to the Foreign Office that the Ethiopian chief had commenced "the arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal Chiefs - a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive Kings", and Plowden in a famous passage continued:

"Some of his ideas may be imperfect, others impracticable..., but a man who... has done so much and contemplates such large designs, cannot be regarded as an ordinary stamp".⁵²

Téwodros, despite his violence and cruelty⁵³ thus emerges, on the evidence available, like Peter the Great, as a man of vision, a Patriot as well as modernizer: a unifier and a reformer whose memory - even if it be one of failure - deserves to be recalled today.

NOTES

1. Téwodros, British consul Plowden reported early in his reign, had "begun to substitute letters for verbal messages". (Great Britain, House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting Abyssinia 1846-1868* (London, 1868), P. 151). Many of these letters subsequently formed part of the British loot from Mäqdäla. This booty, according to Rohlf, an eye-witness, included many "loose leaves and fragments", which together with countless manuscripts, were, "scattered". Stanley says, "in infinite bewilderment and confusion until they dotted the whole surface of the rocky citadel, the slopes of the hill, and the entire road to the camp two miles off". (G. Rohlf, *Meine Mission nach Abessinien* (Leipzig, 1883), p.257; H.M. Stanley, *Coomassie and Magdala* (London, 1874), pp.457-9). A few of these letters which fortuitously survived are reproduced in E. Ullendorff, "A Letter from the Emperor Theodore to Queen Victoria", *Neue Afrikanistische Studien herausgeben von Johannes Lukas* (Hamburg, 1966), pp.251-5; R.K.P. Pankhurst and Germa-Selassie Asfaw, *Tax Records and Inventories of Emperor Téwodros of Ethiopia (1855-1868)* (London, 1979), pp.150-59; D.L. Appleyard, A.K. Irvine and R.K. Pankhurst, *Letters from Ethiopian Rulers (Early and Mid-Nineteenth Century)* (Oxford, 1985), pp.161-83; R.J. Pankhurst, "An Unpublished Letter of King of Kings Téwodros to the Egyptian Governor of the Sudan", *USSR Academy of Sciences, Africa Institute, Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Moscow, 1986), IV, 167-76; and R. Pankhurst, "An Unpublished Order of King of Kings, Téwodros II at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies", *Ethiopian Journal of African Studies* (1988), V, No.7, pp. 1-7; *idem*, "An Unpublished Letter of Emperor Téwodros to Etege, or Queen Yätämäññu", *Ethiopian Journal of African Studies*, (in the Press). On the loot from Mäqdäla see also *idem*, "The Emperor Theodore's Amulet", *Ethiopia Observer* (1962), VI, No.3, p.291.

Most of Téwodros's letters must, however, be presumed lost.

2. H. Dufton, *Narrative of a Journey through Abyssinia* (London, 1867), p.138.
3. C.T. Beke, *The British Captives in Abyssinia* (London, 1867), p.259.
4. British Library, Orient 733. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1877), p.34.
5. Dufton, *op. cit.*, p.83.
6. T. Waldmeier, *Erlebnisse in Abessinien* (Basel, 1869), pp.7-9, 11-24. See also Dufton, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-6.
7. Dufton, *op. cit.*, p.167.
8. *Correspondence*, pp. 219, 467, 486, 570: H. Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore* (London, 1869), II, 101-3.
9. Waldmeier, *Erlebnisse*, pp.47, 55-8, 60-7.

10. H. West Bundell, "History of King Theodore", *Journal of the African Society* (1906), VI, 26-7, 28. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, II, 303-4, 306.
11. C.D. Narrien, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London, 1869), p.367.
12. On the history of the craftsmen see R.K.P. Pankhurst, "The Emperor Theodore and the Question of Foreign Artisans", *Boston University Papers on Africa* (1966), II, 215-35.
13. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp.136-7; *Correspondence*, pp.150-1; T. Heuglin, *Reise nach Abessinien* (Jena, 1861), p.36, 313, 325.
14. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.199; M.M. Moreno, "La cronaca di re Teodoro attributa al dabtara 'Zaneb'", *Rivista di Studi Etiopici* (1942), II, 160-1.
15. H.M. Stern, *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia* (London, 1862), pp.86-7.
16. *Correspondence*, p.458.
17. R.K.P. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa, 1968), pp.567-9.
18. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp.136-7.
19. E. Lapeyre, *Théodore II, le nouvel empire d'Abyssinie et les intérêts français* (Paris, 1865), pp.63-4.
20. *Correspondence*, p.151.
21. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.137.
22. A.E. de Camero, *The Cradle of the Blue Nile* (London, 1877), I, 220.
23. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.137; *Correspondence*, pp.189-90. On Téwodros as road-builder see also the engraving engraving by Bayard published in E. Jonveaux, *Deux ans dans l'Afrique orientale* (Paris, 1871), reproduced in R. Pankhurst, "Téwodros as Depicted in European Engravings" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (1987), XX, 88.
24. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.137-8; T. Waldmeier, *Autobiography* (London, 1887), p.73; Stern, *Wanderings*, p.11.
25. H. Shaw, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), pp.342-4.
26. H.M. Stern, *The British Expedition to Abyssinia* (London, 1869), p.178.
27. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp.294-7.
28. H.M. Stern, *The Campaign in Abyssinia* (Bombay, 1868), pp.217, 222.
29. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.147; H.M. Stern, *The Captive Missionary* (London, 1868), p.251.
30. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p.164.
31. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, II, 120.
32. *Correspondence*, p.133.
33. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 255; *Correspondence*, p.221.

34. Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, pp.72-3.
35. Moreno, *op. cit.*, pp.175,177; Blanc, *op. cit.*, p.2; Stern, *Wanderings*, pp.129, 146; Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, pp.72-3.
36. C. Mondon-Vidailhet, *Chronique de Théodorus II* (Paris, 1905), pp.17-18.
37. Moreno, *op. cit.*, pp.166-7.
38. R. Perini, *Da qua del Maréb* (Firenze, 1905), p.107.
39. Luigi Fusella, "La cronaca dell' imperatore Teodoro II di Etiopia in un manoscritto amharico", *Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* (1954-56), pp. 90-1, VI, 90-1.
40. Stern, *Captive Missionary*, pp.24-5; Blanc, *op. cit.*, p.281; Dufton, *op. cit.*, pp.140-1.
41. G. Douin, *Histoire du règne de Khedive Ismaïl* (Le Caire, 1936-41), III, Pt. II, 293.
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51. Merid Wolde Aregay, "Millenarian Traditions and Peasant Movements in Ethiopia 1500-1850", *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Lund, 1984), pp.257-62 and *idem*, "Literary Origins of Ethiopian Millenarianism", *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, VI, 161-72. On Tēwodros's legend see also R.K.P. Pankhurst, "The Question of Greco-Romanian or Russian Hermit or Adventurer in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", *Abba Salama* (1974), V, 136-59.
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የአማርኛ ቋንቋ ዕድገት በአጼ ቴዎድሮስ ዘመን

አምሳሉ አክሊሉ

አማርኛ ራሱን የቻለ ቋንቋ ሆኖ ከመቼ ዘመን ጀምሮ መነገር እንደጀመረ በእርግጥ ለመናገር ያደገታል። ከሰባተኛው ምዕት ዓመት ድህረ ልደት ክርስቶስ ጀምሮ ግን ግዕዝ እንደ ሕያው ቋንቋ ሆኖ ማገልገሉን ሲያቶም እርሱን ተክቶ የወል መግባቢያ ቋንቋ እየሆነ መሄዱ ይነገራል። አማርኛ ከተባለው ዘመን ጀምሮ እንዲህ የመሰለውን በታ ያገኘ እንጂ እስከ 19ኛው መቶ ምዕተ ዓመት መጀመሪያ ድረስ ለጽሑፍ አገልግሎት የዋለባቸው ጊዜያት በጣም መጠነኛ ናቸው። በ14ኛውና በ15ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን የነገሥታት ሙገሳ ግጥም ሲጻፍበት በ16ኛው ደግሞ ከቶሊካውያንና እርቶዶክሶች የየራሳቸውን ኃይማኖት ለማስፋፋት በስድ ጌባብ ተጠቅመውበታል። ከዚህ በስተቀር እሳይ እስከተጠቀሰው ጊዜ ድረስ የሥነ ጽሑፍ ቋንቋ ሆኖ ያገለገል የነበረው ግዕዝ ነበር።

በሌላ አንጻር ስንመለከት ደግሞ ምንም እንኳን እስከተጠቀሰው ዘመን ድረስ አማርኛ ለሥነ ጽሑፍ አገልግሎት በይውልም በዘመኑ ለነበረው ትምህርት ሁሉ በማስተማሪያና በመማሪያ ቋንቋነት አገልግሏል። ትምህርቶቹ የሚጻፍባቸው ቋንቋ ግዕዝ ቢሆንም ትምህርቱን ለማስተጋቢያ መምህራንም ሆኑ ተማሪዎች የሚገለገሉበት ቋንቋ አማርኛ ነበር። ይህም የመማር ማስተማር ሂደት የትምህርት ተቅዋሞች በሉባቸው የኢትዮጵያ ክፍለተ ሀገራት ሁሉ የነበረና ያለ ልማድ ነው። ማለትም ልዩ ልዩ ቋንቋዎች በሚነገሩባቸው ክፍለተ ሀገራት ሁሉ እንደማስተማሪያ ቋንቋ ሆኖ ያገለገል የነበረው አማርኛ ነበር። ለምሳሌ የመጻሕፍት ቅደስት ትርጓሜዎች የሚካሄዱበት፣ ማንኛውም የትምህርት ዘርፍ የሚተነተንበት፣ የሚገለጽበት በዚሁ ቋንቋ ነበር። እዚህ ላይ መጠቀስ የሚገባው አማርኛ በልዩ ልዩ የኢትዮጵያ ክፍለተ ሀገራት የሚነገር ከሆነና እያንዳንዱም ክፍል የራሱ የሆነ ቀበሌኛ ካለው ትምህርት የሚካሄድበት በየትኛው ቀበሌኛ ነው የሚለው ጉዳይ ነው። መልሱ ከገደ ወይም ከሌላው ሳይሆን በትምህርት አካባቢ ያሉ ሰዎች እንደመደበኛ አድርገው የሚጠቀሙበት እንደወል የሚያገለግላቸው

እግርኛ ነው ከግለት እያልፍም። ዘመናዊ ትምህርት በኢትዮጵያ በገባበት ጊዜ ይኸው የእግርኛ ዓይነት በትምህርትም፣ በሕዝብ መገናኛ ዘዴዎችም በመግባት ሲሠራበት ቶይቷል፤ አሁንም ይሠራበታል።

እግርኛ ለሥነ ጽሑፍ አገልግሎት

እሳይ በተጠቀሰው ሁኔታ ለረጅም ዘመናት ብዙ የኢትዮጵያ ብሔረሰቦችን በግገናኝነት፣ በመግርያና በግስተግሪያ ሂደት ያገለገል የነበረ እግርኛ ከ19ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን አጋማሽ ጀምሮ በተጠናከረ ሁኔታ ለጽሑፍ አገልግሎትም እየዋለ ሄኗል። እግርኛ ለሥነ ጽሑፍ አገልግሎት እየዋለ የሄደበትን ዘመን ለሁለት ክፍለን ግየት እንችላለን። እንደኛው ከእኔ ቴዎድሮስ በፊት ሲሆን ሁለተኛ በእኔ ቴዎድሮስና ከዚያ በኋላ ያለው ዘመን ነው።

ከእኔ ቴዎድሮስ ዘመነ መንግሥት በፊት

ከ17ኛው መቶ ዘመን ጀምሮ ሚስጥናዊያን ወደ ሀገራችን ይመጡ ስለነበርና የእመጣጣቸውም ዓላማ ኃይማኖታቸውን ለማስፋፋት ስለሆነ በጋራ መግባቢያነት በሚያገለገለው በእግርኛ ቋንቋ የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስን ክፍላት በተለይም የሐዲስ ኪዳንን መጻሕፍት እያስተረጎሙና እያሳተሙ ወደ አገር ውስጥ ያስገቡ ነበር። እንዲህ ከሁሉ የመጀመሪያዎቹ መጻሕፍት ውስጥ ጀርመናዊው ፒተር ህይሲንግ እ.ኤ.አ. 1647 ዓ.ም አስተርጉሞ ያሳተመው የእግርኛ የጥሐንስ ወንጌል ይገኝበታል።(1)

በ19ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን መጀመሪያ ሳይ ግለትም በ1818 መላው መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ እንደ አባ አብርሃም በሚባል ኢትዮጵያዊ መነኩሴ ተተርጉሞ ታትሞ ወጥቷል። ከዚህ ትርጉም በኋላ ሌሎች በተናጠል ወደ እግርኛ በመተርጎም በአገር ውስጥ በብዛት ተሰራጭተዋል። ይህ የሚስጥናውያን መጻሕፍት ቅዱሳትን ወደ እግርኛ የመተርጎም ተግባር እየተጠናከረ መሄድ በአገር ውስጥም እግርኛን ለጽሕፈት አገልግሎት የማዋል ዝንባሌ እየቀሰቀሰ የሄደ ሳይሆን አይቀርም። በ19ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን መጀመሪያ ገደማ ጀምሮ የተጻፉትን የነገሥታት፣ የሹማምንትና የመኪንንት ደብዳቤዎች ስንመለከት እንደጥንቱ ልምድ በግዕዝ ቋንቋ ይጻፉ ነበር። ወደ ኋላ ጊዜ ግን ግለትም ወደ 19ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን መካከል የተጻፉትን ደብዳቤዎች ስንመረምር

ገጠናው ይገኛል። ግለትም በግዕዝና በአማርኛ ቶሮት ብሎ ደግሞ በግዕዝ
 ማህበራዊና በአማርኛ ይጻፋ እንደነበረ እናስታውላለን። የግዕዝና
 ማህበራዊ መጠን በአብዛኛው ጊዜ ግዕዝ እንድ እጅ ሲሆን አማርኛው
 ግዕዝ ሲሆን ነበር።(2) በዚያው ክፍለ ዘመን መጨረሻ ላይ
 የግዕዝ ስያሜ ግን ከመግቢያ ዓረፍተ ነገር በስተቀር የደብዳቤው
 ስያሜ አማርኛ ሆኖ ይገኛል። የሚከተለው ደብዳቤ እ.ኤ.አ. በ1810
 የግዕዝ ስያሜ ሲሆን የትግራ ርእሰ መኪንንት ራስ ወልደ ሥላሴ ክፍለ
 ግዕዝ ሆኑ የተጻፈው ለእንግሊዙ ንጉሥ ለሰላሣይ ጀርጅ ነው።

ጳጳሩ ለከ ወሰላመ እግዚአብሔር የሀሉ
 ምስሌክ እንጉሠ ነገሥት ሣልሳይ
 ጊዮርጊስ፤ ክቡር በእግዚአብሔር
 ወናላዊሆሙ ለክርስቲያን በሃይማኖት
 መጠምግባረ ጽድቅ፤ ሞላዊሆሙ ለሰብእ
 ሕንድ ደቂቀ ነገሥት። ወበጽሐ ወዓሊክ
 ጊዮራይ ሰውልት ኅቤየ ወእብጽሐ ሊተ
 ኩሉ ዘወሀብከኒ፤ ምንትኑ እዓሰየብ
 ጸእንተ ኩሉ ዘገብርከ በምድርሰ ወሀበከ
 መሰላግይኒ ይፈጽም ለከ። ንትመየጥ
 ብዘ ዘቀደሚ ነገር... ራሥ ወልደ ሥላሴ(3)

ይህ ደረጃ እ.ኤ.አ. 1811 ለሄንሪ ሶልት የጻፈው ደብዳቤ
 ማህበራዊና የደብዳቤውን ዋና አካል በግዕዝ ይጽፍና
 ማህበራዊን ግለትም እራቱን የመጨረሻ መሥመርቶ አማርኛ
 ስያሜ

ሀገሪን ሦስት ዓመት ሙሉ እንበጣ
 በላው፤ ኩፍኝ ፈጀው። አሁንም ጸላት
 ተነስተብኝ ጎንደር መጣሁ ቀን ሲሰጠኝ
 ጎንደር ብቀ መጥ መጽሐፉን
 እስድላሃለሁ።(4)

ይህ ደረጃ ሳም ጀምሮ ተጽፈው የሚገኙት ደብዳቤዎች ግን በግዕዝ
 ስያሜ ሲሆኑ የተቀረው የደብዳቤዎቹ ዋና አካል አማርኛ ነው።
 ይህም ያህል እንደን መጥቀስ እንችላለን፤ ይኸውም ሲሆን ድንገልና

ሌሎች ሰዎች ለሉዊ ፈሊጥ የጻፉት ደብዳቤ ነው። እንደሚከተለው ይጀምራል፤

ነገረ ሰቶቃው ወላህ ዘተረከውት እምነብ
ንጉሥ ሣህለ ድንግል ወይጪ ማሕፀንተ
ሚካኤል፤ ወመምህር ዘደብረ ሊባኖስ፤
ወእራስ እሊ ርእሰሙ ለመኪንንት፤
ደጀዝማች ውቤ ወደጀች ክንፋ።(5)

ቀጥሎም የተቀረው ሃያ ሰድስቱ መስመር እስከመጨረሻው ድረስ በእማርኛ ይጨርሳል። እንዲህ ያሉ በ19ኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን መካከል ላይ የተጻፉ ደብዳቤዎች በጣም ብዙ ናቸው። ከ1840 እስከ 1850 ዓ.ም. የተጻፉትን ደብዳቤዎች ብቻ ብንመለከት ከሁለት የመቶ ድም የግዕዝ አረፍተ ነገሮች በስተቀር የቀረው እማርኛ ሆኖ እናገኛለን ብዙዎቹም «ዘቲ ጦማር ዘተረከውት እምነብ...ትብላሕ ጎበ...» ከሚል ዐረፍተ ነገር በስተቀር በግዕዝ የተጻፈ መልእክት የለባቸውም።

ከላይ ከጠቀስነው መረዳት የሚቻለው የጽሑፍ ቋንቋ ሆኖ ያገለግል የነበረው ግዕዝ ከ19ኛው መቶ ዓመት መባቻ ጀምሮ ቀስ በቀስ በተጨማሪ በእማርኛ እየለቀቀ መሄዱን ነው። ይህም የለውጥ ሂደት የተገኘው ያለምንም ምክንያት ሳይሆን ሚስጥናውያን እማርኛን የጽሑፍ ቋንቋ አድርገው ከመጠቀማቸው ተጽእኖ የተነሣ መሆኑ የሚያጠራጥር አይመስልም። የነሱን ፈለግ በመከተል እማርኛ ከመነጋገሪያ ቋንቋነት አልፎ ወደ ጽሑፍ ቋንቋነትም ቀስ በቀስ እንዲራመድ ኢትዮጵያውያንም ጥረት ማድረጋቸው ከተጻፉት አያሌ የእማርኛ ደብዳቤዎች እንገነዘባለን።

እማርኛ በአፄ ቴዎድሮስ ጊዜ

አፄ ቴዎድሮስ የነገሡበት ዘመን እማርኛ በመጠኑም ቢሆን የመጻፈያ ቋንቋ ሆኖ ይሠራበት የነበረበት ዘመን መሆኑ ነው። ከዚህ ልምድ የተነሣ አፄ ቴዎድሮስም ሠላሳ ሁለት የሚያህሉ ደብዳቤዎች ለልዩ ልዩ የውጭ አገር ሰዎች ማለትም ለንግሥት ቪክቶሪያ፣ በብሔራት ለንግሥቲቷ መልእክተኛ ለነበረው ለሆርሙዝ ራሳምና ለሌሎችም ጽፈዋል። እ.ኤ.አ. ከ1840 እስከ 1850 እንደተጻፉት ደብዳቤዎች ሁሉ

ገዢ ቴዎድሮስ ደብዳቤዎች ከእንደ በስተቀር «ዛቲ ጦግር ዘተፈነወት
ገዢ—ትዕዛዝ ፡፡፡» በግለት እይጃምሩም። የራሳቸው የሆነ
ገዢ እጃማር ፈጥረዋል። ይኸውም በተለመደው «በስመ እብ
ገዢ ወደ ፡፡፡ ትደስ ፩ እምሳክ ንጉሠ ነገሥት
ገዢ(፩) በሚለው ነው። ይህ የሆነበት ምክንያት ምናልባት «ዛቲ
ገዢ» የሚለው እጃማር «በስመ እብ» የሚለው በሕዝብ ዘንድ
ገዢ የታወቀና የገዕዝም የእማርኛም ሐረግ ስለሆነ ሁኔታውን የበለጠ
ገዢ የገደረገ ታሰቦ ይሆናል ብለን እንገምታለን። ከዚህና ከሌሎችም
ገዢዎች እንደምናየው ቴዎድሮስ ውሎችን፣ ደብዳቤዎችንና
ገዢዎች ከውጭም ሆነ ከውስጥ ሰዎች ጋር የሚያደርጉትን ግንኙነት
ገዢዎች ደርገው ነበር (እልፎ እልፎም በዐረብኛ)።

ገዢ ሳይሆን የቶየው ልምድ ግለትም የነገሥታትን ታሪክ
ገዢ ወደ በቴዎድሮስ ጊዜ ተሸር የራሳቸው ታሪክ በጸሐፊ
ገዢ። በደብተራ ዘነብ «የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ» በሚል እርእስት
ገዢ ተፈፅሏል። ሌላም በዚህ ዘመን የነበረ አለቃ ወልደ ግርዖም
ገዢ ያህር ሁለተኛውን የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ በእማርኛ አዘጋጅቷል።
ገዢ ሌላው ያልጠቀሰ ደራሲ «ያጤ ቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ» በሚል
ገዢ የመፈረሸውን የቴዎድሮስን ዘመን መንግሥት ታሪክ
ገዢ። የመጀመሪያው የቴዎድሮስ ታሪክ በራሳቸው በንጉሡ
ገዢ እንደተዘጋጀ ግወቅ ስንችል ሁለተኛው የርሳቸው ትዕዛዝ
ገዢ እይኑርበት እናውቅም። ይሁንና የመጀመሪያው ድርሰት
ገዢ ስፊ ተቀባይነት ከግግሩ የተነሣ ተበረታተው የደረሱትም
ገዢ ይቆያል። ደብተራ ዘነብ የቴዎድሮስን ታሪክ ከጻፈ በኋላ ሌላ
ገዢ ነፃ መጽሐፍ ደርሷል። ይኸውም «መጽሐፈ ወዋታ ሥጋዊ
ገዢ» የሚል ነው። ይህ መጽሐፍ እስከ 1924 ሳይታተም ቶይቶ
ገዢ ነው የታተመው።

ገዢ ቴዎድሮስ ምንም እንኳ እዋጅ አውጥተው እማርኛ የጽሑፍ
ገዢ ይቆያል ብለው በያሰነገሩም እማርኛ ለዚህ ተግባር አገልጋይ
ገዢ በንጉሥ ፍላጎት የነበራቸው መሆኑን ከእንደንድ መረጃዎች
ገዢ እንችላለን። የሚከተሉትን አራት ጉዳዮች እንይ፤

ሀ. ግርቲን ፍላጅ የተባለው ሚስቶናዊ
እ.አ.አ. በ1856 ዓ.ም ወደ ኢትዮጵያ

ሲመጣ 300 የአግርኛ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ
ይዞ በመምጣቱ ንጉሠ የተደሰቱበት
ቢሆንም በተጨማሪ «መመንጃ የሚሠራ
ሰው ለምን አለመጣችሁም(7)» እንደሌላ
ከመጠትም መጽሐፍት ውስጥ በግዕዝ
ቋንቋም የታተመ ስለነበሩባቸው «ይህን
ማንም የማይገባውን ለምን አመጣችሁ፤
ምን ጥቅም አለው ብለችሁ ነው፤
የተተረጎመው በጣም ጥሩ ነው» (8)
በግለት ድጋፋቸውንና ቅሪታቸውን
አስምተዋል።

ለ. መጻሕፍት ቅዱሳት ወደአግርኛ
እየተተረጎሙ በአገር ውስጥ
መሠራጨታቸውን በማድነቅ
«በእግዚአብሔር፤ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስን
የሰጡንንና ጥንት ጥቂት ብቻ ሲኖሩን
አሁን መንደሩ በለመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ
እንዲሆን ያደረጉትን እንግሊዞችን
እንዲት እንረሳለን» (9) ግለታቸው
ተመዝግቧል።

ሐ. ስሙ እሳይ የተጠቀሰው ሚስቶናዊ
ማርቲን ፍለድ «የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ታሪክ»
በሚል አርእስት እንደ መጽሐፍ በአግርኛ
አዘጋጅቶ ለማሳተም ማሰቡን ንጉሠ
ሰምተው መጽሐፉን እንዲያመጣቸው
አድርገው ከነበቡት በኋላ፤

ይህን መጽሐፍ የጻፍኸው እንተ ነህን
ብለው ጠየቁ፤ ቴስ ፍለድም እዎን እኔ
ነኝ የጻፍሁት ብለው መለሱለቸው።
የጻፍኸው ስለምንድነው ብለው አጼ
ቴዎድሮስ ቢጠይቋቸው መምር ፍለድ
እንዲህ ብለው መለሰ(መለሱ) ያገርዎ

ሕዝብ በጎ ነገር እንዲግሩ ብዬ ወደ
 እገራ ወደ አውሮጳ ሰድጄ ለማሳተም
 እስባለሁ። ከታተመም በኋላ ብዙ
 መጻሕፍት ወደዚህ እስመጣለሁ። ይህ
 መጽሐፍ እኛን ደስ ይለኛል፤ ብመልስልህ
 ትወዳለህ ብለው እኔ ቢጠይቁ መምህር
 ፍላጅ አዎን፤ እንደሰትመው ቢመልሱልኝ
 በወደድሁ ነበር አሉ። ንጉሡም ጥቂት
 ዝም ብለው ቶይተው እንዲህ አሉ ይህን
 እኔ እስቀራለሁ ፤አንተ ግን ሌላ ጻፍ።
 እርሳቸውም እንደገና በብዙ ድካም
 ጉለተኛ መጽሐፍ ጽፈው ወደ አውሮጳ
 ልከው አሳትመው አያሌ ሺህ መጻሕፍት
 ወደ ኢትዮጵያ እስመጡ (10)

መ. በእኔ ቴዎድሮስ ዘመን ብዙ
 የአማርኛ መጻሕፍት ወደ ኢትዮጵያ
 እንደገቡ መፈቀድ ብቻ ሳይሆን ከገቡም
 በኋላ ንጉሡ በየአብያተ ክርስቲያናቱ
 እንዲነበቡ እንዲደረጉ የሚሹ
 መሆናቸውም ታውቋል።(11)

ከላይ ከተጠቀሱት አራት ነጥቦች የምንረዳው እኔ ቴዎድሮስ በግዕዝ
 ፋንታ አማርኛ የጽሕፈት ቋንቋ እንዲሆን የሚሹና ከዚያም
 የሚያበረታቱ ንጉሥ መሆናቸውን ነው።ያለእርሳቸው ድጋፍና ስምምነት
 እኛን ብዛት ያላቸው የአማርኛ መጽሐፍት ቅደሰት ትርጉሞች
 በየመንደሩ በቀሳሉ ሊሰራው እንደማይችሉ መረዳቱ አያደግትም።
 እ.አ.አ. በ1864 ዓ.ም 10,000 ሐዲስ ኪዳን የአማርኛ መጻሕፍት በአገር
 ውስጥ እንደተሠራውና ሌሎች 14,000 ግልባጮች በመታተም ላይ
 እንደነበሩ ተጠቅሷል።(12) እንዲህ ያሉ መጻሕፍት በአማርኛ ቋንቋ
 መሠራውት አማርኛን የጽሑፍ ቋንቋ እንዲሆን የረዳና ያበረታታ ተግባር
 መሆኑን ልንገምት እንችላለን። እኔ ቴዎድሮስ በመጀመርያው
 የመንግሥታቸው ዘመን ከኘሮቴስታንት ሚስዮናውያን ጋር የጠበቀ
 ወደጅነት መሥርተው እንደነበረ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ በአማርኛ በአገር ውስጥ
 በመሠራውቱም ድጋፍ የሚሰጡ እንደነበር ታውቋል። (13)

በቴዎድሮስ ጊዜ አግርኛ በጽሕፈት ላይ እየዋለ የመሠራጨቱ ልምድ ቀስ በቀስ ሥር እየሰደደ ስለሄደ የሥልጣኔ ጦራ በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ የበለጠ እያበራ መሄድ በጀመረበት በአፄ ምኒልክ ዘመን መንግሥት አግርኛ ከቀድሞው ይበልጥ የሥነ ጽሑፍ ቋንቋነቱ እየጎለበተ፤ መጻሕፍት፣ ጋዜጣና ልዩ ልዩ ጽሑፎች የሚወጡበት ቋንቋ እየሆነ ሄዷል። ስለዚህም ለአግርኛ ቋንቋ የጽሑፍ ቋንቋ መሆን እፄ ቴዎድሮስ ያደረጉት እስተዋፅዖ ቸል የሚባል አይደለም።

የሕደግ መዘከሮች

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በቴዎድሮስ ጊዜ አግርኛ በጽሕፈት ላይ እየዋለ የመሠራው ትልቅ ልምድ ቀስ በቀስ ሥር እየሰደደ ስለሄደ የሥልጣኔ ጮራ በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ የበለጠ እያበራ መሄድ በጀመረበት በአፄ ምኒልክ ዘመን መንግሥት አግርኛ ከቀድሞው ይበልጥ የሥነ ጽሑፍ ቋንቋነት እየጎለበተ፣ መጻሕፍት፣ ጋዜጣና ሌሎች ጽሑፎች የሚወጡበት ቋንቋ እየሆነ ሄዷል። ስለዚህም ለአግርኛ ቋንቋ የጽሑፍ ቋንቋ መሆን እፄ ቴዎድሮስ ያደረጉት እስተዋፅዖ ቸል የሚባል አይደለም።

የሕዳግ መዘከርኝ

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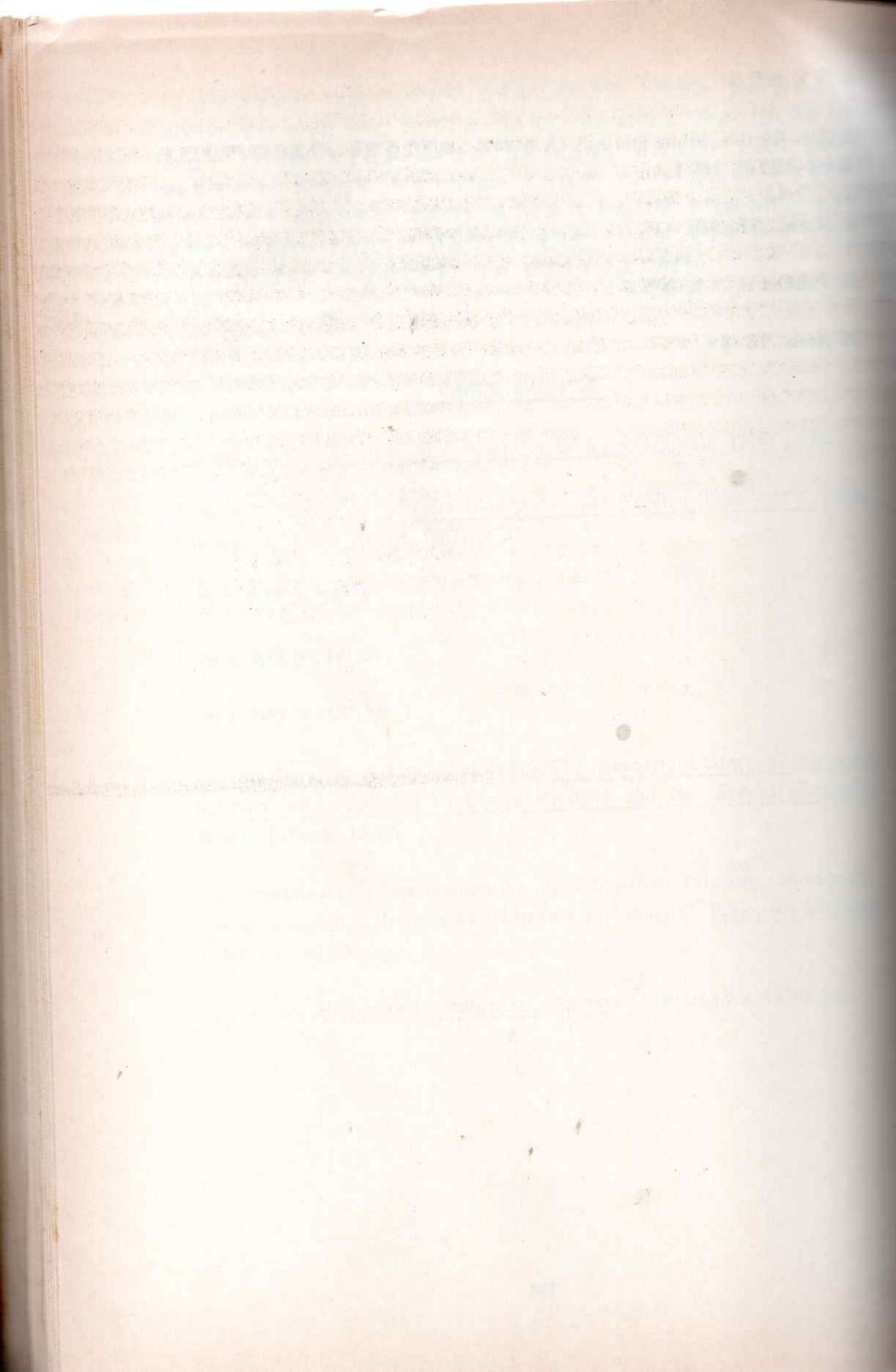
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የግሪክ ገጽ 90

የግሪክ ገጽ ከግሪክ

የግሪክ ገጽ 15



PART III

IMAGES OF TÉWODROS

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

Printed by J. St. John, at the

PRINTERS, in the Strand

1724

Part II

CHAPTER I

OF THE

REIGN OF

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የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታ በታሪካዊ አሰሳል ውስጥ

ስዩም ወልደ

እያንዳንዱ ሕዝብ የተለያየ የራሱ የሆኑ ጃግኖች አሉት።
ያንዳንዱ ጃግና ደግሞ አፈታሪካዊ ወይም እውነታዊ፣ በሕይወት ያለ
ወይም የሌለ ግለሰብ ነው። ጃግና እሱ ከሚኖርበት ራቅ ባለ ወይም
የራሱ ባለ ኃላፊና የወደፊት ጊዜ ግንባራዊ ሚና፣ ወይም የአንዳንድ
ሀላዊ እሴቶች ቁም ነገር ተምሳሌት ሆኖ ይቀርባል።(1)

ጃግንነት በግንባራዊ ትርጉማቸው የለቀ ስፍራ የሚይዙ የልዩ
ተግባራት ክንዋኔ ነው። እነዚህም ግንባራዊ ትርጉሞች ከሰፊው ሕዝብ
ወንፈሳዊና ቁሳኦካላዊ ጥቅሞች ጋር የሚመጣጠኑ ፍራጋሰቦችን
የሚያንፀባርቁ ይሆናሉ። ጃግንነት እንደ ግለሰብ መስዋዕት ለመሆን
ልብ መሉነት፣ በደፋርነትና በዝግጁነት የሚያሳየው ተግባር ነው።

የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝቦች በየራሳቸው ታሪክ፣ አፈታሪክ፣ ኃይማኖትና
ዕለታዊ ተግባሮቻቸው አያሌ ጃግኖች የነበሩዋቸውና ያሉዋቸው
ሆኑ በብዙ መድረኮች ተወስቷል፤ ይወሰዳል። የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝቦች
የራሳቸው ከስገኚቸው ጃግኖች መካከል ደግሞ ለአንድ የኢትዮጵያ
ሕዝብ የጋራ ጃግና ለመሆን እድል ያጋጠማቸው የታሪክ ጃግኖች ጥቂት
ነበሩ። በተለይም የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ከውጭ ጠላት ጋር በደረጋቸው
ተደጋጋሚ ተጋድሎዎች በልዩ ልዩ ቅርጹ ጃግንነትን ያከናወኑ
ግለሰቦች ያገኙዋቸው ሥፍራዎች የለቁ ናቸው። መደበኛው
ኢምፔሪያሊዝም ከተከሰተ በኋላ በመቅደላ፣ በመተማ፣ በደጋሊ፣
በማይጨው፣ በአጋዴን በሰሜን ኢትዮጵያ ለሕዝቦቿ ነፃነትና አንድነት
ተደረጉት ፍልሚያዎች ሁሉ ሕይወታቸውን በመስዋዕትነት የለገሱ
ግለሰቦች በርካታ ናቸው። እነዚህ ብቻም ሳይሆኑ ለግንባራዊ ነፃነት፣
ፍትህና ለእኩልነት ሲታገሉ የቶዩት ልጆቿ ሁሉ ደግሞ በጃግንነት
ወዝገብ ውስጥ በመወዝገብ ላይ መሆናቸው ግልፅ ነው። ምክንያቱም
ጃግኖች ሁሉ በጃግንነት ተግባራቸው ግግሳት የሚወሱና የሚዘከሩ
ላይደሉምና።

ይህ የውይይት ዝግጅት የተደረገለት የቴዎድሮስ ጃግንነት
ማለዳው ጀምሮ ብዙ ሲባልለት የቶየ ነው። የግለሰቡ ሕይወት

ከለፈበት ከአንድ መቶ ሃያ ዓመት ወዲህ በልዩ ልዩ መልኩ በመድረግ ላይ ሲቀርብ ቶይቷል።

በዚህ ውይይት ላይ ለማቅረብ የምረጠው ስለ ታሪካዊው ጃግና፣ ብሔራዊው ጃግና፣ የሰነዎግባሩ ጃግና ሳይሆን ስለ ባህላዊው ጃግና «ቴዎድሮስ» ነው። የቴዎድሮስ ባህላዊ ጃግንነት ሰፊ ባለ መልኩ የሚታይ ነው። በሕዝባዊ ግጥሞች፣ በዘፈኖች፣ በተውኔቶች፣ በልብወለዶች፣ (2) በግጥሞች፣ በቅርጻቅርጾች፣ በሰዕሎችና በእደጥበቦች ሥራዎች በመሳሰሉት ውስጥ ሁሉ የሚገለጽውና የተገለፀው ገፅታ ይሆናል። የዚህ ፅሁፍ ዋናው ትኩረት ግን በሰዕልና በቅርጻቅርፅ ዘርፎች ላይ ነው። በተለይ «በታሪካዊ አሳሳል» ዘር ውስጥ የሚታየውን የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታ የሚመለከት ነው።

‘ታሪካዊ አሳሳል’ በሰዕል ጥበብ ውስጥ ራሱን የቻለ አንድ የአሳሳል ዘር (3) ነው። ይህ ዘር የራሱ መሠረተ ሃሳቦች ያሉት ነው። ታሪካዊ እድገትን ተከትሎ እያደገ የመጣ ከሌሎች የአሳሳል ዘሮች የተለየ የጎላ ዘር ነው። በመሆኑም ስለዚህ በባህል ጃግንነት ጎልቶ ስለመጣው ስለቴዎድሮስ ገጽታ የሚደረጉትን አገላለጾች በጭሩ በዚህ ዘር ውስጥ መቃኘት የመቅደሉን ውጊያ መቶ ሃያኛውን ዓመት ለማክበር ከሚደረገው ዝግጅት ጋር ይበልጥ የሚቀራረብ ሆኖ እንደታደ ያደርገዋል። ይሁን እንጂ ‘ታሪካዊ አሳሳል’ በኢትዮጵያ የሰዕል ታሪክ ውስጥ እጅግ የተለመደ ከለመሆኑም በሻገር በቅርብ ጊዜ የተከሰተ መሆኑ ይታወቃል።

ከሁሉም በፊት ‘ታሪካዊ’ ስለሚለው ቅፅል ወይም ፅንሰ ሥራ ትምህርት ብለን የጋራ ግንዛቤ መወጣት አስፈላጊ ሆኖ እናገኘዋለን። ቃሉ ዘፈ በብዙ ገፁ ሁለገብ ሆኖ ስለምናገኘው ያለአግባቡም ተግባር ሲሰጠው ይታያል። ‘ሰፊ’ ጠባብ ግንዛቤ ካለቸው ፅንሰሃሳቦች አንዱ ነው። ማንኛውም የጎብረተሰብ ዕለታዊ እንቅስቃሴ በታሪክ ሰፊ ግንዛቤ ውስጥ የሚታቀፍ ሲሆን ለጎብረተሰቡ የተለየ ማጎበራዊ ትርጉም የሚሰጠው ከንዋኔ ደግሞ በታሪክ ጠባብ ግንዛቤ ውስጥ የሚታሰብ ነው። ለምሳሌ የዘፈ 120 ዓመት መቅደሉ ላይ የተከናወነው ድርጊት በታሪክ ጠባብ ግንዛቤ ውስጥ የምንይዘው፣ ዘፈ እሱን አስታውሰን የምንወያየው ውይይት በታሪክ ሰፊው ግንዛቤ ውስጥ የምንመዘገበው ነው። ከዚህም በመነሳት ‘ታሪካዊ’ የሚለው ቅፅል ለአሳሳል የምንጠቀምበት ከጠባብ

ግንዛቤው እኳም ነው። በመሆኑም ታሪካዊ የአባባል ዘር ከሰላላ ጥበብ ዘርች መካከል ዋነኛው ዘር ሆኖ የሚታሰበው በግንኙነትም ገብረተሰብ ታሪክ ውስጥ በግንባራዊነት የላቀ ክስተትና ታሪካዊ ድርጊት እንዲሁም ግልሰቦች አልቶ የሚያሳይ ዘር በመሆኑ ነው። ታሪካዊ አባባል በአጠቃላይ ራት ባሉ ጊዜያት ድርጊቶች ላይ የሚያተኩር ቢሆንም በትርብ ጊዜያት ድርጊቶችም ላይ የሚያተኩር ከመሆኑም በላይ በገብረተሰቡ ከፍተኛ ትርጉም የያዙ ከሆኑ የሚያቀርባቸው ክስተቶችና ድርጊቶች አሉ።

በእይታዊ ጥበባት ውስጥ ታሪካዊ አባባል የሚቀርበው በገድገድ ሰላላ፣ በሪሊፍ ቅርፅ ቅርፅ፣ በዜሪያ ክብ ሃውልትና በሕትመት/ግራፊክ/ ጥበብ ቴክኒኮች ነው። በይዘቱም ከሌሎች የአባባል ዘርች በሚወሰደቸው አናሰሮች ይዋቀራል። ለምሳሌ ከዕለታዊ ሕይወት ትርጉሞች ዘር፣ ከምስል አባባል ዘርፍ ከመልክእምድር አባባል ዘር በመውሰድ የሚዋቀር ሊሆን ይችላል። እንዲሁም ደግሞ ለገብረተሰቡ ወታደራዊ ክንዋኔዎች የላቁና ታሪካዊ ትርጉም የሚሰጣቸውን የውጊያ ትርጉሞች በታሪካዊ አባባል ግቅረብ በጣም የተለመደ ነው።

ከዚህ ግንዛቤ እኳም በመነሣት በታሪካዊ አባባል ውስጥ የቴዎድሮስን ገፅ ሁኔታ ስንመረምር የሚያሳየው እድገት የማያቋርጥና የሚደብር ሆኖ እናገኘዋለን። ነገር ግን በጥበባዊ ትንተና ውስጥ በርካታ ሊታሰቡ የሚገባቸው ጥያቄዎች ይነሳሉ። የመጀመሪያው ጥያቄ የሰነሰብእ /የእንትሮፖሎጂ/ ጥያቄ ነው። እነዚህ በየሰዕላዊ ድርሰቶቹ ውስጥ የምናየቸው የቴዎድሮስ መልኮች ከሕይወት የተቀደ ወይስ ምናብ የፈጠረው ነው? በተለይ ቴዎድሮስ በነበረበት ኢትዮጵያ የግለሰብ ምስል አባባል ፈጽሞ ያልተለመደበትና የጋይግፍታዊ ሰዕል አባባል የጎሳ ስፍራ የያዘበት ኢትዮጵያ ነበረች። ስለሆነም የቴዎድሮስ እውነተኛ ምስል ተሰሎ ይገኛል ብሎ ግሰብ የሚከብድ ሆኖ የሚታይ ነው። ይሁን እንጂ የቴዎድሮስ ምስል ከእውነታው ተገልብጦ የተሳለና የተባዛ ለመሆኑ በጊዮም ሰዣን ፖሪስ በ1975 እ.ኤ.አ መታተሙ ይታወቃል። በዚህ ጉርድ ምስል አግካይነት እውነተኛውን ገፅ መገመት ይቻላል። ከዚህም በተረፈ በሕትመት ጥበብ አግካይነት የምናውቃቸው የእንድ እንግሊዝዊ መኮንን ንድፎች /ጥናቶች/ በርካት ያሉ ድርሰቶችን አቅርበውልናል። የንድፎቹ ጥናቶች የእውነታ ይሁኑ የምናብ አሁንም ቢሆን ለጊዜው በቂ መረጃ አልተገኘላቸውም።

በእነዚህ ከላይ በተጠቀሱት ድርሰቶች ውስጥ በእንደንደቹ የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታ የሚታይባቸው ሲሆኑ በሌሎቹ የመቅደላ ተራራና የሴባስቶፖል መድፍ በብዙ ሕዝብ ሲጎተት የሚታይባቸው ናቸው። ቴዎድሮስ በፈረስ ላይ ሆኖ ከሠራዊቱ ጋር ሲጓዝ፤ ቴዎድሮስ ከእናብስት መካከል፤ ቴዎድሮስ በፈረስ ላይ ሆኖ ሲጓዝ፤ ቴዎድሮስ ከመኪንንቱ ጋር... ወዘተ የመሳሰሉትን ድርሰቶች እናገኛለን። በጊዮም ለዣን ጎላሜው ከታተመው ጉርድ ምስል ሌላ ሁለተኛ ጉርድ ምስል እናገኛለን። ይህ ምስል እምብዛም በሰፊው የሚታወቅ አይደለም። በተለይ ደራሲው ግርማቸው ተክለጋዋርያት 'ቴዎድሮስ' የተሰኘው ተውኔት በመፅሐፍነት ታትሞ በወጣ ጊዜ የመፅሀፉ ሽፋን በመሆኑ በሀገር ውስጥ ሊታወቅ ቻለ እንጂ ከዚያ በፊት የሚታወቅ አልነበረም ግለት ይቻላል።

ሁለቱ ጉርድ ምስሎች በኢትዮግራፊያዊ ይዘቶቻቸው የተለያዩ ናቸው። በተለይ በፀጉር አሰራር ፈሊጥና በአለባበስ የተለያዩ ሆነው እናገኛቸዋለን። በጊዮም ለዣን የታተመው ጉርድ ምስል ለአብዛኛዎቻችን የቴዎድሮስና የዮሐንስ መታወቂያ የሆነው የፀጉር አሰራር ፈሊጥ/ባለሹሩባው/ ሲሆን ሁለተኛው ጉርድ ምስል ወደሁኞል የተሰበሰበ ጎፈሬ የሚታይበት ምስል ነው። በጣም የመታወቅ ዕድል ያጋጠመው ባለሹርባው የፀጉር አሰራር ፈሊጥ የሚታይበቱ የቴዎድሮስ ገፅ በብዙዎቹ የኋለኛ ስዕላዊ ድርሰቶች ውስጥ ተደጋግሞ የሚታየው ነው። ቀደም ሲል የጠቀስናቸው ድርሰታዊ ንድፎችና ሁለቱ ምስላዊ ንድፎች በ19ኛው ምእት ዓመት በአውሮፓ የታተሙና የታወቁ ነበሩ እንጂ በኢትዮጵያ እምብዛም የሚታወቁ አልነበሩም። ምክንያቱም በዚያ ዘመን የሕትመት ጥበብም ሆነ የቴክኖሎጂ አጠቃቀም ገና የታወቀና የተለመደ አልነበረም።

ሁለቱም ምስሎች በስነሰብአዊ ይዘታቸው እምብዛም የጎላ ልዩነት አይታይባቸውም። በኢትዮጵያ የስዕል ባህል ውስጥ የቴዎድሮስ ገፅ ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ በይፋ የተሰለው በ1923 የፓርላማው ሕንፃ /ያሁኑ የኢሠፓ ጽ/ቤት/ በተሠራ ጊዜ ነው። ንጉሥ ተፈሪ 'አፄ ኃይለሥላሴ' ተብለው ሲነገሱ ሲሉ የመጀመሪያውን ሕገ መንግሥት ዝግጅት አደረጉ። የፓርላማውንም ሕንፃ አሠሩ። በሕንፃው ውስጥ

በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች

እነዚህም 'የሰሎሞንና የሳባዩ'
'የንጉስ ሣህለሥላሴ' 'የአጼ ጽሑፍ' 'የደግሞዊ'
እንዲሁም 'የአቡነ ተክለጋይግናት'
ከነዚህም እንደ የቴዎድሮስ ምስል ነበር።
እግሊዳ ወረራ ወቅት በመቃጠላቸው ምክንያት
በታሪክ መረጃ ከማወቃችን በቀር ለገለፃ በሚያመች
በዓሊ ብላታ እምእሳላፍ ሕሩይ በ1961 በቃለ
ከመዘገብነት መረጃ አለቃ መዝሙር፤
አቶ ገብረመድህን፤ አለቃ ገብረሥላሴ፤ አቶ
አገሃሁ እንግዳ በወቅቱ የተሰተፉት ሰአሊዎች
ይታያል።

በዚህም ገጽ ለጀግንነት ተምሳሌት በመሆን በብዙዎቹ የጥበብ
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
እግሊዳ ወረራ በኋላ ነው። ከ1933 ወዲህ ገብረተሰቡ
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች

«ጥይት ስለውሃ ማነው የሚጠጣ?
ቴዎድሮስ ብቻ ነው። ጥሙን የሚወጣ፤»

እግሊዳ ግጥም መሠረት ብዙዎቹ ትውፊታዊ ሰዓሊዎች እጂ
በግድግዳዎች ላይ የሚሰቀሉ በርካታ ሰዕሮች

ርእሰ ነገር አድርገውት ነበር ግለት ይቻላል። እነዚህን ትውፊታዊ ሰዕሎች በተራ ወረቀት ላይ፣ በውሃ ቀለም በቀለል ቴክኒክ በብዙት እየሠሩ፣ በርካሽ ዋጋ ይሸጡ ነበር። በተለይ በአርበኞችና በአምባሾች የመጀመሪያዎቹ ዓመታት የአርበኞችና የቴዎድሮስ ገፃች በብዛት በጤቤት ሰዕልነት ይሠሩ ነበር።

እንዲሁም ትውፊታዊ ይዘት ያላቸው የቀለም ቅብ ሰዕሎች ደግሞ ይበልጥ ታሪካዊ የጦርነት ትርጉም ድርሰቶች ነበሩ። አብዛኛው ይህን የነበረው የዓድዋንና የማይወውን ጦርነቶች በማሰብ ይሁን እንደ አልፎ አልፎ የቴዎድሮስንም ገፅታ ይይዙ ነበር። በመቅደላ ውጊያ ላይ ቢሆንም ሰዕሎቹ ያደረጉት ትኩረት እምበዛም መጠነኛ ነበረ ግለት ይቻላል። ከዚህ ይልቅ ገን ቴዎድሮስን በዙፋን ችሎት ላይ በተለይ በፍርድ ችሎት ወቅት በማቅረብ ያሰዩ ነበር።

በተራኪነት ይዘቱ በርካታ ተውኔታዊ ድርሰቶችን የያዙ ንድፍ የምናየው 'ጣይቱ ብጡል' በተሰኘው በመኮንን እንደልካቸው መፅሐፍ ውስጥ ነው። ምንም እንኳን በዚህ መፅሐፍ ውስጥ የሰነ ፅሁፉ ሞት ገፀባህርይ ተደርጋ የተሰሉት እቴጌ ጣይቱ ቢሆኑም ተራኪዎቹ ንድፎች ውስጥ በብዛት የቀረበው የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታና ድርጊቶች ናቸው።

ከታወቁት ሰዓሊዎች መካከል ግቼ ሠረቀ የግን ብርሃን፣ እንዲሁም ሜትር አርቲስት አፈወርቅ ተክሌ፣ አለ ፈለገ ሰላም ሰስቱም በተለያዩ የጥበባት ዘርፎች፣ በዘይት ቀለም፣ በግራፈክስና በቅርፅ፣ በቴዎድሮስን ገፅታ በልዩ ልዩ ትእዛዞች እንደሠሩ እናውቃለን። ለምሳሌ፡- ሠረቀ የግን ብርሃን ከጊዮም ለዣን የተገኘውን የተለመደውን የቴዎድሮስ ጉርድ ምስል በዘይት ቀለም ቅብ የሠራው ቢሆን፣ ሜትር አርቲስት አፈወርቅ ተክሌ ገፅ በመጠቀም ከኢትዮጵያ ከርታ ጋር የቴምብር ዲዛይን አሳትሟል። ቴምብሩ የወጣው በ1955 ለሰድስት ነገሥታት መታሰቢያ ቢሆን፣ እነዚህም ነገሥታት ሠርፀድንግል፣ ፋሲለደስ፣ አድያም ሰገድ፣ ቴዎድሮስ፣ ሶሐንስና ምንጪ ናቸው። እንዲሁም አለ ፈለገሰላም በ1960 የመቅደላን ውጊያ ሞት ዓመት ምክንያት በማድረግ በአዲስ አበባ ግዘጋጃ ቤት አደራገድ በአዲስ አበባ ባቡር ጣቢያ መካከል በሚገኘው አዲሱ መንገድ መሆኑ ላይ የሚገኝ አደባባይ በቴዎድሮስ ስም እንዲሰየምና ሀውልቱ እንዲሠራበት ቢወሰን ጥናቱን በቅርፅ፣ በጥይት ሞዴል ለአደባባዩ ምርጫ

በዚህ አገር፤ ለምረቃው በዓል ቀርቦ የነበረው የሞደል ጥናት
ዘመናዊ እናብስቱ ያሉበት ድርሰት ነበር። ነገር ግን ከዚያም በኋላ
በዚህ አገር፤ በየጊዜው ጋሣብ እየተሰጠበት ሲለዋወጥ እስከ
በዚህ ድረስ ድረስ ሳይሰጥበት ሐውልቱም ሳይሠራ አደባባዩ ብቻ
በዚህ ድረስ እስከዛሬ እንደቀየ ነው። እነዚህ ከላይ ሰማቸውን
የሚያሳዩት ሰው ሰዓሊዎች የቴዎድሮስን ገፅ በፈጠራ ሥራ ላይ
በዚህ ድረስ (በሥራ ትእዛዝ) ነው። ይሁን እንጂ አፈወርቅ
በዚህ ገጽ፤ ገጃምን፤ ሸዋን፤ ወሎንና ትግራይን በሚወክሉና
በዚህ ድረስ የኢትዮጵያን አንድነት ከሚያሳዩ እጆች ጋር የተለመደውን
የሚያሳዩ ጉርድ ምስል በግክል የሰለው የጉዋሽ ቴክኒክ ስዕል አለ።
በዚህ ድረስ የጉዋሽ የጥናቱም ቅብ ሥራ የተሠራው ቀደም ሲል ለተጠቀሰው
የሚያሳዩ ሕትመት አግራጭ በመሆን ነበር። ይህ ድርሰት ከታተመው
በዚህ ድረስ መልክ የነበረው ሲሆን ያለመመረጥ ደግሞ የሚያስደንቅ
በዚህ ድረስ ዘርዘር ገለጻ መግባት አስፈላጊ አይሆንም።

በዚህ ድረስ ሁለተኛ አጋማሽ በኋላ በርካታ በቴዎድሮስ ገፅ
በዚህ ድረስ ወጣት ሰዓሊዎች ታይተዋል። በቴዎድሮስ ገፅ ታ
በዚህ ድረስ በመጠቀም ከቀረቡት ከእነዚህ ወጣት ሰዓሊዎች መካከል
በዚህ ድረስ በአዲስ አበባ የሰዕልና የቅርፃቅርፅ ትምህርት ቤት ይማሩ
በዚህ ድረስ ናቸው። ታደሰ ባላይነህ፤ ዳንኤል ግፊ፤ ታዩ ታደሰ፤ ታደሰ
በዚህ ድረስ እጅግ ጥሩነህ፤ ሙሉጌታ ታፈሰ፤ ደምሴ ሺፈራው ኪዳኔ
በዚህ ድረስ ታደሰ። ከአግተር ሰዓሊዎች መካከል ደግሞ ሸምበል ለግ
በዚህ ድረስ ራሴ ጭምር እንገኝበታለን። በተለይ ለላፋት ሃያ ዓመታት
በዚህ ድረስ የቅርፃቅርፅና በሕትመት ጥበብ ውስጥ የቴዎድሮስ ምስል
በዚህ ድረስ ተሠርተዋል። ለብዙዎቹ ተደጋጋሚ የፈጠራ ገፅ ባህርይ
በዚህ ድረስ የአዲስ አበባው ስነጥበብ ትምህርት ቤት መምህር
በዚህ ድረስ ከሶቪየት ኅብረት ትምህርቱ መልስ በኋላ ከ1962 ጀምሮ
በዚህ ድረስ ገፅ በተለያዩ ድርሰቶች ደጋጋሚ ሠርቶት እናገኛለን።

በዚህ ድረስ ለሌሎች ከእርሱ መለስተኛ ወጣት ለሆኑት ጠቢባን
በዚህ ድረስ ገፅ ተዘምዶ የሚታያቸው ሲባሰቱ፤ ከተባለው መድፍ
በዚህ ድረስ። በዚህ ረገድ ታደሰ መስፍን የሠራው የሞዘይክ ስዕል፤
በዚህ ድረስ ታፈሰ የሰለው የዘይት ቀለም ቅብ ስዕል ገልተው የሚጠቀሱ
በዚህ ድረስ ናቸው። ለመድፉ ገፅ ከቴዎድሮስ ያላነሰ ስፍራ
በዚህ ድረስ። እነዚህንና ሌሎችንም የቴዎድሮስ ገፅ የቀረበባቸውን

ቅርፅ ቅርጾችና ሰዕሎች ስንመለከት እጉልተን የምናቀርበው እንደ ጥያቄ
አለ። ይኸውም እነዚህ በተለያዩ የጥበብ መስኮች የቀረፁት
የቴዎድሮስን ገፅታ የሚያሳዩን ሥራዎች መደበኛ ታሪካዊ ሥራዎች
ናቸውን? ለምሳሌ፡- ሙሉጌታ ታረሰ በ1972 ለመመሪያ የቀረበው
የዲፕሎማ ሥራ 'ወደ መቅደሳ ጉዞ' በሚል ርእስ የሰለው ስጦታ
በታሪካዊነት የሚታሰብ ነው። ይሁን እንጂ ለሙሉጌታ ታረሰ የታሪክ
መረጃ ለፈጠራ ሥራው የፈጠራ መነሻ እንጂ ዋነኛው የገለፃ ሃሳብ
መነሻ እንዳልሆነ ግልፅ አድርጎታል። የቴዎድሮስና የሌሎች ሰብአዊ
ገፅታ እንኳ በደዘት ይታወቁ እንደሆነ እንጂ በአትጥግራፈኛ ዊና
በእንትርጉሞች ይታወቃል። የሚታወቁ ሆነው አልተሰለፉ።
መድፋም ሆነ መድፋ የተጎተተበት ሁኔታ በደረሰው የተገለፀ እንጂ
በተወሰነ ጥናት ተደርጎበት የተሰማ አይደለም። ከአዲስ አበባ የስጦታ
ትምህርት ቤት ደረጃ አኳያ መደበኛ ታሪካዊ አሳሳል ሁኔታ ሲገመገም
የሙሉጌታ የመቅደሳ ጉዞ ከፍተኛ ግምት የሚሰጠው ነው።

ሙሉጌታ ታረሰ ሰዕሉን እጅግ ተውኔታዊ በሆነ መልክ ያዋቀረው
ሲሆን በተውኔቱ ውስጥ ቴዎድሮስ ማዕከላዊ ገፅ ባህርይ ሆኖ እንደወጣ
በተሰኘ መልክ ያሰናደው ሆኖ ይገኛል። ከእርሱ ቀድሞ በኢትዮጵያ
ሰዕል ውስጥ በድፍረት ያልተደረገ እውቃቀር ያዋቀረ ይመስላል።
የቴዎድሮስም ሆነ የሌሎች ገፅ ባህርያት፣ በተለይ መድፋን የሚጎትት
ሁለት በራዎች፣ በተመልካች ገሊና ውስጥ የሕልምነት ጠባቂ
የሚታይባቸው ይመስላሉ። የጦር አዝማቹ የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታ በፈጠራ
ወይም በቸክለ እንቅስቃሴ ውስጥ በቁጥነት የሚታይ ነው። ስጦታ
ታሪካዊ አሳሳል ቢመስልም በብዙ ረገድ ለታሪካዊ ሰዕልነት ክብደት
ያንሰዋል። ከቴክኒክ እስከ ደዘት ድረስ ያለው ክብደት ሰዕሉን
በመደበኛ ታሪካዊ አሳሳል ውስጥ የሚያስመድበው አይሆንም።
የመለስተኛ ሙያ ትምህርት ቤት የሥራ ውጤት በመሆኑ ከታሪካዊ
አሳሳል አኳያ ብዙ ትኩረትን የሚሰብ አይደለም።

ምናልባት በዚህ ፅሁፍ ውስጥ የጠለቀ የአሳሳል ትንተና
ባይደረግባቸውም በመደበኛ ታሪካዊ አሳሳልነት ጎልተው የሚታዩ
የእሸቱ ጥሩነትና የደምቤ ሽፈራው ሰእሎች ናቸው።

በግልጽ ሁኔታ ሰዓሊዎች ከአዲስ አበባ የሰዓልና የትርጓሜ ርዕሰ ሚኒስትር ሆኖ ለግዕዝ የተመረቁ ሰዓሊዎች ናቸው። ቶም ብለን የሚያስረዳን ይህናል።

በ1977 ከት/ቤተ ሊመረት 'ሪህብ የፈታው' የሚለውን የግንባታ ስራ የሚያንግባር የተደነቀ ሰአል ሳለ። በኋለኛው የመድረክ ሰአል ሆኖ ሲሠራ ሳለ የሁለት አውራ ድርድሮች ውጊያ በ1968 መጨረሻ በ1969 መስከረም ወር በእ.አ. ግዛጋጃ ቤት አደራሽ ጋር ለትርኢት ቀርቦ ታየለት። ሁለቱ አውራ ድርድሮች በውጊያው ነጻ ደምቶና ተደክሞ ሲታይ ቀደም ግን በርትቶ የበላይነት ወይም የአሸናፊነት ሁኔታ ይታያል። እሸቱ በወቅቱ የነበረውን እውነታ በሚገባ ቀደም ብሎ ተነበየ በያሰኘው ወዲያው በዘመኑ ሽብርና ቀይ ሽብር ተምሳሌነታዊ መልእክት እንደነበር ሰዕሉን ያደነቁለት ጥቂት ተመልካቾች ይሁን እንጂ ይህ ሰዕል ለብዙዎቹ ተመልካቾች ውጊያ መሰሉ ከመታየት አላለፈም ነበር።

በግልጽ ሁኔታ ትምህርት ወደ ሶቪየት ኅብረት በ1969 መጨረሻ በግዕዝ የእይታ ጥበባት እንስቲትዩት ከሰበሰቡ ዓመት በኋላ በኋለኛው በ1976 የመመረቂያ ሥራውን ሲያቀርብ 240 በ300 ሴንቲ ሜትር የሆነ ግዙፍ ሰዕል በመሳሉ ታሪክ ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ለውጭ አገር ተግሪ እንዲሰጠው ተደረገ። ይህ ሰዕል «መይሰው ከሰ» የተሠራ ሰአል ሲሆን በቴዎድሮስ ተጋድሎ ላይ ነው።

በግልጽ ሁኔታ ከፍተኛ የሆነ የብዙኃን እንቅስቃሴ ይታያል። በግልጽ ሁኔታ በሦስት መሠረታዊ ጥላኖች ላይ የተከፈለ ነው። በግልጽ ሁኔታ (foreground) ላይ ነፃ ሰፍራ ግን ከበተመልካቹ በኩል የተገኘ የደመና 'ጥላ' ያረፈበት፤ በመሀሉ ግላን (central ground) እጅግ ብዙ የሆኑ ሰዎች በቡድን በቡድን በጀርባው ጥላን (background) የሰሜን ኢትዮጵያ የተቀረቡት ነው። በነዚህ ተራሮች ላይ ወርትግ የሆነ የፀሐይ

ብርሃን መላ በመላ ያረፈባቸው መስሎ ይታያሉ። በሰዎች ላይ
ያረፈው ብርሃን ግን መለስ ባለ ሁኔታ የደበዘዘ ነው። ሰዎች
በፅሁፍ መሰረትና በብርሃን ውስጥ የተዋጡ ይመስላሉ። ጥቂት ፈረሰኞች
ብዙሃን እግረኞች ከመሀል ልቅ የሚታየውን ቴዎድሮስን ከበው ወደፊት
ይሄዳሉ። በፈረሰኝ ላይ ሁነው በቴዎድሮስ ዙሪያ የሚታዩት የጦር
እዝማችና ናቸው። በአጠቃላይ የሰው ጎርፍ ይታያል። እንደም ለው
የፈዘዘ ወይም የደነገጠ ወይም የተከዘ አይታይባቸውም። ሁሉም
የነቁ፤ በራስ የተማመኑ፤ በኩራት ወደፊት የሚገዙ ናቸው።
ፈረሰኞችም ይሁኑ እግረኞች አብዛኛዎቹ ጋዝ፤ ጦርና ጎራዶ የያዙ
ናቸው። በማሲንቶ የሚያነቁ፤ በነጋሪት የዘመቻ ሰሜት የሚቀሰቅሱ፤
በመለከትና በእምቢልታ ጉዞውን የሚያደምቁ ሁሉ በድርሰት ውስጥ
ተዋቅረዋል።

ይሁን እንጂ ከነዚህ ሁሉ ልቅና መጥቶ የሚታየው ቀንጥንጥ በጭን
ነጭ ያበሻ ፈረስ ላይ የተቀመጠው ቴዎድሮስ ነው። በፈረሱ ላይ
የተቀመጠው ቴዎድሮስ ከሌሎች ፈረሰኞች ሁሉ ልቅ በታላቅ ግርግ
ሞገስ የሚታይ ነው። ቴዎድሮስ በእንደ አዳራሽ ውስጥ ከፍ ባለ ሥርዓት
በሚገኝ ዙፋን ላይ የተቀመጠ እንጂ በመንቀሳቀስ ላይ በሚገኝ ፈረስ
ላይ ተቀምጦ የሚገዝ አይመስልም። እከባቢውን በመላ ከበታዩ
አድርጎ የገዛው፤ በቁጥጥሩ ሥር ያደረገውና በእንደ መንፈስ
የሚመራው መስሎ ይታያል። ምንም ዓይነት ብቸኝነት፤ ተሸናፊነትና
የበታችነት የሚታይበት ግለሰብ አይመስልም። ነገር ግን በፊት እገልጻለሁ
ከእንደ ኃይል ጋር ሊጋጭና ሊጋፈጥ እንደተዘጋጀ በጉልህ ይታያል።
ውስጣዊ ወኔውና ቁጣው ፈንቅሎት የሚያከንፈው ይመስላል። እርሱ
ለታላቅ ተግባር የተዘጋጀ በመሆኑ ሌሎችን ሁሉ በዚህ መንፈስ
የሚመራ ነው።

ይሁን እንጂ በግንባሩ ፕላን (foreground) ላይ የሚታየው የደመና
ጥላ ሁኔታውን ሁሉ እጅግ አድርጎ ያከብደዋል። ጥቂው
ምስለኑ-ገራዊነት የተላበሰ ነው። የዚያን ሁሉ ሠራዊት ጉዞ የሚሸናፈር
ጥላ ሆኖ ይታያል። ዝርዝር ይዘቱን መተንተን አመች አይደለም።

ለዓሊ እሸቱ ጥሩነህ በታሪካዊ ድርጊት ላይ ተመሥርቶ
በምስሉ-ነገራዊና በተምሳሌታዊ አቀራረብ የተጠቀመ መሆኑ የማይታይ
ነው። እሸቱ በእንትሮፖሎጂያዊም ይሁን በኢትዮግራፊያዊ ደረጃ

ተመልካችን ጥያቄ ላይ የሚጥል ሆኖ እይገኝም። ከተለያዩ ሰነዶች የዘመኑን ሰዎች እካለዊና ቁስእካለዊ ገፅታዎች በመጠኑም ቢሆን ያጠና ይመስላል። ከእውነተኛ ጋር የተቀራረበ ቢሆንም ተጨባጭ ታሪካዊ ሁኔታን ግን እቀረበ ብሎ ግለት እያስደፍርም። በሰዓሊው በራሱ እንደበት እንደተገለጸው 'በእሱ መደበኛ የታሪካዊ አሳሳል መሠረተ-ኃሳቦችን የተከተለ እይደለም'። ገፁ በሀርያቱን ለማጥናት፣ አለባበሳቸውን፣ ድርጊቱ የተከናወነበት ሥፍራ፣...ወዘተ የመሰለሉትን ሁሉ ከባህር ግደ ሆኖ በማጥናት ሊሠራ እንዳልቻለ ግልፅ ነው። ይሁን እንጂ በመጻሕፍት ላይ ከተገኙት መረጃዎች በመጠቀም የተሰበሰበ ኃሳብ ለማንፀባረቅ ተችሎአል።

የዚህ ታሪካዊ አሳሳል መንስዔ ምን እንደሆነ ከሰለፈው እንደበት ለማወቅ ችያለሁ። እንደ የሰዓሊው የትምህርት ቤት ጓደኛ የሆነ ሩሲያዊ "የኩሎከቭ ጦርነት" በሚል ርእስ የሠራው ሰዕል ያቀረበቸው ጆግኖች በርእስ ነገርም ሆነ በተገባር ከቴዎድሮስ ትግል ጋር የሚመሳሰሉ ሆኖ ታዩት ታሰቡት። እሸቱም፤ የመደሰው ካሳ የጦር እንቅስቃሴ በኢትዮጵያ ከተከናወኑት የላቁ ድርጊቶች እንደ ሆኖ እንደታሰብ እደራጅቶታል። ከብሔራዊ ድንበር የሚያልፉ እንደሉ ለማሳየት የሚችልበት ታሪካዊ ድርጊት እንደሆነም እምኖ የሠራው ሰዕል ነው። ለዚያ ታላቅ ጆግኖ ትልም መሰከትና ያለመሰከት ተንዣቦ በተንጠለጠለው የደመና ጥላ እማካይነት ውጤቱን እንጠልጥሎ ትቶታል።

የደመናው ጥላ የትራጂዲ ተምሳሌት መሆኑ ነው። ትራጂዲው በገዛ እጅ ራስን መግደል ነው። (4) የእካል ሞት የሚታይበት ነው። የትልም ሞት ግን የሌለበት ነው። ኃይለኞችን እንደሕፃን በክንደ ይዞ የኖረ እንደ ቴዎድሮስ ያለ ቶራጥ በሰው ክንድ፣ በወቋኝ እጅ መያዝን ሊታገስ አልቻለም። ያገሩን ሕዝብ እንደ ለማድረግ ሲታገል በውስጥም ሆነ በውጪ ያስቸገሩትን ሁሉ ለማሸነፍ ሲል ራሱ በንደት የቀጣቸው ሰያንስ የሀገሩን ሰዎች ከክፋ ጥፋት ላይ ለለመጣል ያደረገው ውሳኔ ደግሞ የብልህነትና ጆግኖነት ውሳኔ ነው። ያ በጎ ምኞት፣ ያ የላቀ ትልም እውን የሚሆነው ከፊት ለፊቱ ያለው ደመና ዘንቦ ከበስተሁዋላ በተፈጥሮ ላይ ሰፍኖ የሚታየው ብራግ እየሮ በሰዎቹም ላይ ሲያርፍ ነው። የራስ መስዋዕትነቱ ምስጢር በዚህ ሰም የተሸፈነ ወርቅ ነው። ትልሙ የተበታተነውን መሰብሰብ፣ ሰብስቦም ታላቅና የማይበገር ግድረግ ነበር። የእርሱ ትልምና በትልሙም ሊውንነት የሚከፈለው

መስዋዕትነት በእሸቱ እመለካከት አላለቀም። ይህ የተንጠለጠለ የደመና ጥላ፣ የትራጂኒ ተምሳሌት ዛሬም እንድነት ላለግሰደረር ከሚደረገው መስዋዕትነት ጋር በጣም የተዛመደ ነው። የመቅደሳ ጃግኖች እንደሞቱት ሁሉ ዛሬም እያሌ የኢትዮጵያ ልጆች በእካል ይሞታሉ። የመቅደሳ ጃግኖች በመንፈስ ህያው የሆኑትን ያህል የዘረዘሩ ወደፊት ህያው ሆነው ይኖራሉ። እውነት የነበረው መበታተን ሞት ሲሆን ትልሙ ገን እንድነት ነው። ትልም እሸናፈ ሲሆን ሞት ራሱ ይሞታል። ሞት ተረት ይሆናል። በዚህ በንዣበበ ደመና ጥላ ውስጥ የተደበቀው የእሸቱ ጥሩነህ ትኔ በጭሩ ይህ ነው።

ይህ ለሰዓሊ እሸቱ ጥሩነህ ታላቅ ክብር ያስገኘ ገዢ ስዕል በመመረቂያ ሥራነት ሰዓሊው የሰለጠነበት ኢንስቲትዩት ንብረት ሆኖ ሞስኮ መቅረቱ ደግሞ ሌላው መለስተኛ ትራጂኒ ሆኖ ይታያል። እንደ ዘዴ ተፈልጎ ወደ ሀገር ካልመጣ ወይም ሰዓሊው ደግሞ ካልሠራ ሌላው ድካማችን ሁሉ 'የእምቧይ ክብ' ነው።

ቀደም ሲል የጠቀሰነው ሌላው በታሪካዊ አሳሳል ፈርጅ የምናየው የደምቤ ሺፈራው ሰዓል ነው። ደምቤ ሺፈራው የእ.አ. የስዕልና ቅርፃቅርጽ ትምህርት ቤት የ1979 ምሩቅ ነው። ደምቤ የእድገት በኅብረት ዘመቻ ዘማች በይሆን ኖሮ እሸቱ ጥሩነህ ከተመረቀ እንደ እመት በሁዋላ ማለት በ1967 የሚመረቅ ይሆን ነበር። ከእሸቱ ጋር የሚቀራረብ ሆኖ የሚታይበት ሌላም አጋጣሚ አለ። ቀደም ሲል እንደጠቀስኩት እሸቱ ጥሩነህ የነጭና የቀይ ሽብርን ተውኔት እንደነቢይ ቀደም ብሎ በ1968 በሁለት አውራ ደርዎች ውጊያ 'ጠላት' ብሎ በመስየም እንደቀረበው ሁሉ ደምቤ ሺፈራውም ከእንደ ዓመት በሁዋላ በ1969 ለመመረቂያ ሥራ ያቀረበው 'ፍልሚያ' በተለየ ርእስ የሁለት ተዋጊ በራዎች ተውኔታዊ ሁኔታ ነው። ሁለቱ በራዎች ነጭና ቀይ ናቸው። በስዕሉ ድርሰት ውስጥ በተዋቀረው ጥላን መሰረት ሰስት ክፍሎች አሉ። የሁዋላ፣ የመሀልና የፊት ለፊት የጥላን ክፍሎች ናቸው። ሁለቱ ተዋጊ በራዎች በመሀሉ ክፍል ወደፊት ለፊቱ ወደ ተመልካቹ ቀርበው ይገኛሉ። የመሀልኛው የጥላኑ ክፍል ሰፊ ሜዳ ነው። ሁለቱ ቀይና ነጭ በራዎች ሲዋጉ ቶመው የሚመለከቱ በርካታ ሰዎች ይሁኑ በራዎች በዚህ ሰፊ ሜዳ ላይ ቶመው ይታያሉ። ድንጋጤና ጭንቀት ሰፍኖበቸዋል። ነገር ተዋጊ በራ በጣም ደክሞ

በመሸነፍ ላይ እየታየ ከጎሳው ደግሞ የግጦብቀው ገደል አለ። ገደሉ ውስጥ መግባቱ ለተመልካች ህሊና የተተወ ነው።

በእርግጥ ደምቤ ሺፈራው ይህን ስዕል በሠራበት ወቅት ነጭ ሽብር የተወደደበት ጊዜ ነበር። በአንፃሩም ለቀይ ሽብር ተግባር ጥሪ ይደረግበት የነበረም ጊዜ ነበር። የሰማሊያ ወረራ በምሥራቅና ደቡብ ምሥራቅ በኩል የተወደደበት እንጂ ቀይ ሽብር ገና ያልተጀመረበት ጊዜ ነበር። ደምቤ በዚህ ስዕሉና በሌሎችም የትምህርት ውጤቱ ከፍተኛ ግዕረግ በግግሩት የመጀመሪያው የትምህርት ቤቱ ምሩቅ ሆኖ በትምህርት ቤቱ ውስጥ እንዲያስተምር የመመረጥ እድል የአጋጠመው ምስጋና ወጣት ነበር እዚያም ለአንድ ዓመት ከስተግረ በሁዋላ 1976 ወደ ሶቪየት ሕብረት ለከፍተኛ ትምህርት ሄደ። በኪየቭ የጥበባት ኢንስቲትዩት ከፍተኛ ትምህርቱን ተከታትሎ ከዉረሰ በኋላ በ1978 የመመረቂያውን ሥራ ርእሰ-ነገር ያደረገው የመቅደሳውን ውጊያ ነው። ይህ ስዕል ቁመቱ 160 ሲንቲ ሜትር ሲሆን ስፋቱ 300 ሴንቲ ሜትር ነው። ርእሱም «ከውጊያ በፊት» ይላል። የደምቤ ሺፈራው ቴዎድሮስ እጅግ ብዙ በሆኑና በቡድን በቡድን በተከፋፈሉ ጦረኞች የተዋቀረ ነው። ቴዎድሮስ የጦረኞቹን ሁኔታ በፊና በፊና አሰልፎ የሚገመገም ይመስላል። ቀይ ጃኖውን ለብሶ በወታደራዊ እርምጃ ወደፊት (ወደተመልካቹ) ይመጣል። የቴዎድሮስ ገፅታ የድርሰቱን መሀለኛ ስፍራ አልያዘም። ከተመልካች በስተቀኝ በኩል ከተዋቀረው ቡድን ጋር ወደ መሀል ሲል ነው የሚገኘው። በእሸቱ ቴዎድሮስ ውስጥ ጎልተው የወጡት የሰሜን ተራራዎች በደምቤ ስእል ውስጥ እምብዛም ስፍራ አላገኙም። ይህ ስዕል እንደእሸቱ ስዕል ምስሉ-ነገራዊነት የተላበሰ ሳይሆን በታሪካዊነት የተሠራ ነው። ይሁን እንጂ የታሪካዊ አሳሳል መሠረተ-ታሳቦችን አሟልቶ አይገኝም። ደምቤ ራሱም ሲናገር «ቴዎድሮስ የላቀ ጃግና ሆኖ እንዲታይ ሠራሁት እንጂ በተወበዘው መረጃዎች ላይ ጥናት አድርጌ አልሠራሁትም። ስለጃግንነት ሳስብ ትዝ ያለኝ እሱ ነው። ያው በንደንድ አጋጣሚ ከግውቃቸው ነገሮች በመነሳት በአብዛኛው በአይነ-ገሊና ነው የሠራሁት እንጂ ተገቢውን ጥናት አድርጌ አልሠራሁትም። ቴዎድሮስን ከድህነት፣ ከከከሰ ሽጭ ልጅነቱ ተነስቶ ንጉሠ ነገሥትነት ሥልጣን ላይ መድረሱ ያስደስተኛል። ከዚያም የተበታተነች ኢትዮጵያን አንድ ለማድረግ ግሰቡና መታገሉ ያከራኛል።» በማለት ሃሳቡን በጭሩ ገልጿል።

በደምሴ ሸፈራው ሰዕል ውስጥ ቴዎድሮስ ይዘት የሚገኘው ሥፍራ በጣም የላቀ ነው። ሰፊ ያለው በላቀዩ ጂኖ የቴዎድሮስ የአካል እንቅስቃሴ የዚያ ሁሉ ሠራዊት እንቅስቃሴ ግለበሰቢያና መተሳሰሪያ አድርጎ ዉርሶታል። በዚህ ሰዕል ውስጥ ከቴዎድሮስ ሌላ ጎልቶ የሚታይ ጆርባውን ለተመልካቹ የሰጠውና ፈቱን ወደ ቴዎድሮስ ያዘረው ሰው ነው። በደምሴ ሃሳብ ይህ ግዙፍ ተራራ ፈታውራሪ ገብርዩ መሆኑ ነው። 'የቴዎድሮስ ትልቁ መከታ' ብሎታል ሰዓሊው። እንደ እጅቴ ጥሩነህ 'መይሰው ከሰ' ሁሉ የደምሴ ሸፈራው 'ከውጊያው በፊት' ሰፊ ገለጻና ትንተና ሊደረግበት የሚችል ሰዕል ነው።

ግ ጠ ታ ለ ያ

በኢትዮጵያ ዘመናዊ የጥበብ ባህል ውስጥ አዲስ የተከሠተው ታሪካዊ የአሰላሳ ዘር ከብዙዎቹ ታሪካዊ ጃግኖች መሀል በቴዎድሮስ ላይ ለላፋት ጥቂት የቅርብ ዓመታት ከፍተኛ ትኩረት አድርጓል። ይህ አቀራረብ በታሪካዊ ተዉበጭ ሁኔታ ላይ የሚያተኩርና የታሪካዊ አሰላሳን መሰረተ-ኃሳቦች ሙሉ በሙሉ የተከተለ አይደለም። ይሁን እንጂ የቴዎድሮስን ተጋድሎ በኃላፊ ተገባርነት የሚያሳይ የታሪክ መዘከር ብቻ ያደረገ ሳይሆን በታሪካዊ አሰላሳ አግካይነት የቅርብ ጊዜንና የዘረውን ተጋድሎ ለመገለጽ በተምሳሌትነት የመጠቀሚያ ዘዴም ሆኗል።

የቴዎድሮስ ታሪካዊና ብሔራዊ ጃግንነት ወደ ባህላዊ ጃግንነት የተሸጋገረው ከኢጣሊያ ጦርነት ወዲህ ነው። ባህላዊ ጃግንነቱ ከታሪክ ሁኔታ ጋር በተገናዘበ መልኩ ቢሆንም በተዉበጭ እውነታ ላይ በመመሥረት የወታደራዊ፣ የፖለቲካዊና የማሕበራዊ ትልሞች መገለጫ ተምሳሌት ሆኗል። መርፈ በልተሠራበት አገር ለብዙዎቹ ጠቢባን የሲባስቶፖልን መድፍ የመሥራት ሙከራ ታላቅ ታሳቢነትን የያዘ ይመስላል።

የቴዎድሮስ ትራጂያዊ አግኝት በተሰፋ ሰዉነት የሚታሰብ አግኝት እንጂ በተሰፋ አስቶራጭነት የሚታሰብ ትራጂያ አይደለም። በዚህ ምክንያት የኢትዮጵያ አንድነት የሚያስከፍለው መስዋዕትነት በቴዎድሮስ ተሰፋ ሰዉ ትራጂያ የተመሰለ የአንድነትና የአድገት መሃል ተምሳሌት ሆኖ ይታያል።

በስሌን ሩቢንሰን አገለለፅ እንደተነገረው በኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ውስጥ የቴዎድሮስ ሥልጣን ላይ መውጣት-የዘመነ መስፍንትን ፍጻሜና የአዲስ ዘመን ጅግራን የሚያሳይ ነው። በብዙ ትውልዶች ሂደት ውስጥ ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ በኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት፤ እውነተኛ ወታደራዊና ፖለቲካዊ ኃይል በአንድ ሰው እጅ ከፍተኛ ሥልጣን መግኘቱ የቻለበት ወቅት የቴዎድሮስ ዘመን ነው (5) የዚህ ሁሉ ታሪካዊ እውነት ነፃነት በመደበኛ ታሪካዊ አሰራር ወደፊት ጎልቶ እንደሚወጣ ተስፋ እናደርጋለን።

የታሪካዊ አሰራር ዘር የሀገር ፍቅርና የአለም አቀፋዊነትን መንፈስ በዜጎች ጎሊና ላይ ለመቅረፅና ለማስቀረፅ በጣም የሚጠቅም ዘር ነው። በአንድ በዛሬው የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ታሪክ ውስጥ የአብዮት ትልሞችን አሸናፊነት ለማረጋገጥ በለታሪኩ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ በጀግኖች (6) ተጋድሎ በተገነባው ታሪክ ላይ የቶመናወደፊት በታሪካዊ ተስፋ የሚጓዝ መሆኑን ለማሳየት የሚያስችል ነው።

ሌሎችም ታሪካዊና ብሔራዊ ጀግኖቻችን የባህል ጀግኖች ለመሆን የቴዎድሮስ ዕድል እንደሚገጥማቸው ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ።

ዋቢ ምንጮች፤

- 1 Theodorsen George A. A Dictionary of Sociology (New York. 1969) p.185
- 2 See Taye Assefa, "Tewodros in Historical Fiction" (M.A. Thesis Submitted to A.A.U,1980)
- 3 Great Soviet Encyclopedia (New York,1983) Vol. 10,71
- 4 Boreu. Y.Aesthetics, (Moscow, 1985). pp.62.70

ስለትራጂዲ ፅንሰ ሃሳብ ይበልጥ ለመገንዘብ ይረዳል።

5 Rubenson S., The Survival of Ethiopian Independence (London, 1976), p.1.

6 ሥዩም ወልደ፡ «የቴዎድሮስ ጀግንነት በሳይንስና በጥበብ ውስጥ»፤
የካቲት፡ 5ኛ ዓመት፡ ቁጥር 2፡ ገፅ 11-15 ቁጥር 3፡ ገጽ 11-25
ይመለከታል።

የቴዎድሮስ እንባ እና

የታንጉት ምስጢር ንፅፅራዊ ገምገማ

ታዩ አስፋ

አንደኛው ታዋቂ የኢትዮጵያ ደራስያን አፄ ቴዎድሮስን የታሪካዊ ልቦለዶቻቸው ርዕሰ ጉዳይ በማድረግ መፃፍ ከጀመሩ በርከት ያሉ ዓመታት አልፈዋል። ከነዚህም ደራስያን መሃከል አንዱ ብርሃኑ ዘርይሁን ሲሆን እሱም በ1958 የቴዎድሮስ እንባን፣ በ1979 ደግሞ ይኸንኑ ልቦለድ ከልሰና አስፋፍተ በመፃፍ የታንጉት ምስጢር በሚል ርዕስ ለአንባብያን አቅርቧል። በዚህች አነስተኛ የገምገማ ጽሑፈ የማተኮረውም በሁለቱ ሥራዎች የአተራረክ ስልት፣ የትልም አወቃቀርና የገፀ ባሕርያት አሳሳቢ ንፅፅር ላይ ነው።

የታንጉት ምስጢር ትረካ አጀማመር ከየቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ አጀማመር ለየት ያለ ነው። የኋለኛው ልቦለድ በትረካው መክፈቻ ላይ የሚያቀርበው የታሪኩ መደምደምያ የሆነውን የአፄ ቴዎድሮስን ዜና ዕረፍት በማስቀደምና ከዚሁ አያይዘም የዜናው ዋና ተቀባይና የታሪኩ ማዕከላዊ ግጭት ዓቢይ አንቀሳቃሽ የሆነውን ባህታዊ አክሊሉን በተዘዋዋሪ መንገድ ከአንባቢው ጋር በማስተዋወቅ ነው። ወደያው ተከታትሎም አፄ ቴዎድሮስ በደረሰ ሂደት ዘውድ ከጫኑ በኋላ የነጋሽነታቸው ማረጋገጫ፣ የዓለማቸው መገለጫ የሆነውን አዋጅ በጎንደር ከተማ ባስነገሩበት ዕለት የነበረውን ደግሞ የሕዝብ አቀባበል ጉልህና ትዕይንታዊ በሆነ መልክ ይቀርብላል። የመንደርደሪያው ክፍል አቀራረብ ዝርዝሮች ለታሪኩ ግስጋሴ ባላቸው አስፈላጊነት ላይ የተመሠረተ ከመሆኑም በላይ ደራሲው በአንባቢው ላይ መፍጠር የሚፈልገውን ስሜት በቀላሉ እንዲያገኝ ይረዳል። ለምሳሌ ስለ ቴዎድሮስ በመቅደሳ ማረፍ የሚያትተው ዜና የቀረበው በንዲት አጭር አንቀጽ ብቻ ሲሆን ዋና አስፈላጊነቱም በሕታዊ አክሊሉ ይህን ዜና መነሻ ምክንያት በማድረግ ቴዎድሮስን ለመግል ያደረጉትን ትግል ታሪክ እንዲፅፉ (እናም ትረካው በሚቀጥለው ክፍል እንዲጀመር)

ማመቻቸት ነው። ደራሲው በሕታዊ አክሊሉ የልበለደ አቢይ ተራኪ እንደሆኑ ማሰቡንም ከሚቀጥለው የአክሊሉ ንግግር እንረዳለን።(1)

«ቴዎድሮስ የወደቀው ከመቅደሳ በፊት ነው አሉ»። አሁንም ጥቂት ተከዙ። «ገፋፍተው ከጣሉት መካከልም አንድ እኔ ነኝ።...ልጄ ብዕርና መቃታ መጣልኛለህ?» ሲሉ ጠየቁት። «ከንስሐ አንድ ይህ ነው።» አሉ በሀሳባቸው። «ታሪኩ መነገር አለበት።» ከዚያ በፊት ግን ለማንም ከቶ ለማንም አላጫወቱትም ነበር።(ገጽ 9)

ቴዎድሮስን «ገፋፍተው ከጣሉት መካከል አንድ እኔ ነኝ» የሚሉት በሕታዊ አክሊሉ በዚህች እንደዋዘ ጣል በሚያደርጋት ንግግራቸው የአንባቢውን ትኩረት በንደ ወደራሳቸው ከመሰባቸውም በላይ በተዘዋዋሪም የሚቀጥለውን ታሪክ ማዕከላዊ ግጭት ጠቆም በማድረግ ሂደቱን እንባቢው እንዲከታተለው ይጋብዛሉ። አንባቢውም አክሊሉ ቴዎድሮስን ለመጣል ያነሳሳቸውን ምክንያት የማወቅ ጉጉት ያድርበታል። ከዚያ ቀጥሎ የሚቀርቡትን ሁኔታዎችና ጭውውቶች ከአክሊሉ እንፃር ለማየት ይጥራል። ሆኖም በሚቀጥለው ክፍል ውስጥ ለጉጉቱ ማርኪያ የሚሆነው መልስ ወደያው አይቀርብለትም = እንደያውም ከዚህ ጋር የተያያዘ ሌላ ነገር የማወቅ ጉጉት ይታከልበታል። እዋጁ በተነገረበት ክብረ በዓል ዕለት እፄ ቴዎድሮስ የፋሲል ግንብ ሰገነት ላይ ብቅ ሲሉ ከሥራቸው ምድሪቷን አጫናንቋት ይተራመስ የነበረው ሕዝብ በእልልታና በሆታ ሲያወክ እንኳንስ ከዚያ የሥልጣን ጣሪያ ላይ ለማውረድ የሚደልትና ምላስ አደልጦት ክፉ ቃል የሚተነፍስባቸውም ሰው የለሚገኝ አይመስልም። እዋጁ በሚያበሰረው ብሩህ ተስፋ ረክቶም ይሁን በቴዎድሮስ ግርማ ሞገስ ተማርኮ ከሚጨፍረው ሕዝብ መካከል በአካልም በመንፈስም ተነጥለው የሚታዩት ጋረድና አክሊሉ ናቸው። ቴዎድሮስን የመጣሉ ሴራ የሚሸረበውም ከዚህ አንስቶና በነዚህ ሁለቱ አፈንጋጮች አማካይነት ነው። ታዲያ እነዚህ የቴዎድሮስ በጎ ዓለማ ተፃራሪዎች ይኸን አሁን ከጫማቸው ስር የሚያረገድላቸውን ሕዝብ ድጋፍ እንዴት ሊገፋባቸውና ኃይልና ሥልጣናቸውን ሊያደክሙባቸው ቻሉ? አንባቢው የዚህን መልስ

ለማግኘት ሲል ትኩረቱን በነዚህ (በተጓዳኝነት በየፈናቸው መኪንንቱንና ከህናቱን በሚወክሉት) የንጉሡ በላንጣዎች ላይ በመጣል እያንዳንዱን ድርጊታቸውን በጥምና እንዲከታተል የትረካው ስልት ያስገድደዋል። ቴዎድሮስ ለአገራቸውና ለሕዝባቸው ያለውን በጎ ዓላማ በአዋጁ አማካይነት ቀደም ብሎ መገለፁም እንባቢው የጋረድና የአክሊሉን ጠባብና አፍራሽ ዓላማ በእንፃራዊነት እንዲገነዘብና ገና ከመጀመሪያው ራሱን ከቴዎድሮስ ጋር በመንፈስ በማመሳሰል እርሯቸውን እንዲረዳላቸው ለመገፋፋት ነው።

የታንጉት ምስጢር ትረካ በአንፃሩ የሚጀምረው ቴዎድሮስ ከመንገሳቸው በፊት በጎንደር ከተማ ውስጥ ሰፍኖ የነበረውን የፖለቲካና የማግበራዊ ኑሮ ዝቅጠትና የሥነ ምግባር መላሸቅ በአጠቃላይ መልክ በሚገልፅ የደጀን ሐተታ ነው። ይህ ሐተታ ቀጥሎ ከሚቀርበው የባለገሯ የታንጉትን በጎንደር ገንቦችና በነዋሪዎችዋ አለባበስ መደነቅ ከሚያሳይ ጭውውት ጋር ምንም የቅርብ ተያያዥነት የሌለው፣ ፍሬ ሀሳቡ እያደር በተደጋጋሚ የሚገለፅ በመሆኑ እሁን ቢቀር የታሪኩን ሂደት የማያደናቅፍ፣ ድሪቱ ነው። የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ውስጥ ከአዋጁ በኋላ ግብር፣ ከዚያም ሹም ሽርና ጉባኤ ተከታትለው በትዕይንታዊ መልክ ይቀርባሉ። እነዚህ ሁነቶች በዘፈቀደ ሳይሆን «በመንስኤ - - ውጤት - - መንስኤ» ዓይነት ሰንሰለት የተሰለፉ ናቸው። በእንደዚያ ያለ ክብረ በዓል ዕለት የንጉሥ ግብር መግባቱ በጊዜው በነበረው በሐልፍ ወግ የሚጠበቅ ነው። ከአዋጁ በኋላ ለሚዘረጋው አዲስ አስተዳደር ሹሞችን በየደረጃው መሰየምና ከነዚህ ጋርም ስለሚያስፈልጉት ለውጦች መመካከር ሁኔታው የሚጠይቃቸው ሂደቶች ናቸው። እንዲያም ሆኖ ግዕዝላዊውን ግጭት በማፋፋምና የታሪኩን ግስጋሴ በማጠናከር ረገድ የየራሳቸው ድርሻ እንዳላቸው የምንገነዘበው አክሊሉ በእያንዳንዱ ሂደት ውስጥ በመሳተፍ ስለሚያስተሳስራቸው ነው። በአንፃሩ ገን የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ የሚቀርቡትን በታንጉትና በገብርዬ፣ በታንጉትና በቴዎድሮስ መካከል የሚደረጉ ጭውውቶች እንዲሁም ቀጥሎ የሚቀርበውን ሹም ሽርና በመኪንንቱና በቴዎድሮስ መሃከል የሚደረግ ክርክር በጉልህ የሚያስተሳስር፣ ለ«መንስኤ - - ውጤት - - ጠመንስኤ» ዓይነት ግንኙነት መሠረት ሊሆን የሚችለው ግዕዝላዊ ግጭት ገና ከመነሻው አይከሰትም። ሹም ሽሩም ሆነ በመኪንንቱና በእኔ ቴዎድሮስ መሃከል የሚደረገው ክርክር የሚከሰተው በድንገት ነው። ስለሆነም የእንባቢውን ጉጉት ከመጀመሪያው ለመቀስቀስና

«ምህኛቱን አስረዳኝ!» አለ ጋረድ
ዐይኑን እያጉረጠረጠ። «አየህ፤ ገብሮ
ጦር አዝማች ተሹሞ የለ? እሱን ቢያግ
የከሰ ኃይል ምን ይሆናል? ብለህ አሰብ።
ስለ ገብሮ ሐሳብ አለኝ። ያች ሚሽቱም
ገና በላገር ገራገር ናት አሉ። ስለርሷም
ሐሳብ አለኝ። እንደልኩህ ብልሃቱን ለኔ
ተውልኝ! አሁን እንሂድ!» አክሊሉ
ጋረድን በወርቁ ሰብ አድርጎ ሲያነሳው
እንደገራም ከብት ተሰበሰቡ።

የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ትልም እውቃቀር በ «መንስኤ -- ውጤት -- መንስኤ» ዓይነት የሁነቶች ግንኙነት ላይ የተመሠረተ መሆኑ ቀደም ብሎ ተጠቁሟል። እያንዳንዱ ሁኔታ የግዕዝላዊውን ግጭት ዕድገትና የታሪኩን የወደፊት ግስጋሴ የግፋጠን ድርሽ አለው። የታሪካዊውና የልቦለዳውዊ ሁኔታ እመራረጥና ቅንጅትም እንደዚሁ ትልሙን ለማጎልመስ በላቸው ቀጥተኛ ሚና ላይ የተመሠረተ ነው። ለምሳሌ ከሹም ሽሩ በኋላ የሚቀርበው ታሪካዊው የአፄ ቴዎድሮስ ወደሸዋ መዝመት ከልቦለዳዊው የአክሊሉ ሴራ ጋር እንደት ጸጸ))

እንደሚከተለው ጥያቄዎችን እንደሚያፋፍመው እንመልከት። በአዋጁ ክብረ በዓል ዕለት ከሕዝቡ አረንጓዝነው በሚታዩት በአካላሉና በጋረድ መሐከል ያለውን ግንኙነት ሲገልጽ ተራኪው እንዲህ ይካላል፤

ትጥቁን ግሰመር በግወደው ፓረድና
ከወታደርም ከካህናትም በልሆነው
በደብተራ እክሊሉ መካከል እምብዛም

የሰሜን ወደጅንት አልነበረም።
 እንደያውም ጋረድ በልቡ አክሊሉን
 ከፋኛ ይንቀጥል። ገን የቴዎድሮስ ጥገሰ
 በሁለቱ ላይ ከተቀነሰ ወዲህ እየተጠጋጉ
 ሄደዋል። ያቀራረባቸው ይህ የወል
 ሰሜን ነው። (ገፅ 17-18)

የቴዎድሮስ ጥገሰ ስለተቀነሰበት ብቻ ጋረድ ትጥቁን የሥጋ
 በሆነው በንጉሡ ላይ ለማንሳት እንደማይደፍር ስለሚያውቅ
 ለፋኛ ሰፊ ትስቀሳ ማድረግ አለበት። ጋረድ የወገራ ገዢ እንደሆነ
 በመሸሙ በዚህ ረከቶ ከሴራው ወደጊሳ በማሸገገግ ከንጉሡ
 ጋር ተወልዶ እንደይገጥምበት ስለሰጋም ልቡን በቅናት መመረዝና
 ምኞቱን ፃቅሙን ማወቅ እስከሚሰነው ድረስ መገንባት
 ይኸን ለማድረግ ለወኔው ድፍረት ለምኞቱ ተስፋ የሚሰጡ፤
 ይበልጥ ሊታመኑ የሚችሉ ትንቢት ነጋሪዎችና መጽሐፍ
 ዘንድ ጋረድን ማዘር አለበት። ቴዎድሮስ እዚያው እያሉ
 ሊሆን የሚችል የትርብ ዘመዳቸው ይህን ቢያደርግ ደግሞ
 መጋበዝ ይሆናል። ከዚህ እንፃር የሸዋው ዘመቻ ንጉሡን
 ከማራቁም በላይ ለአክሊሉ ሰፊ ጊዜ ይሰጠዋል። በርግጥም
 ይሳካላታል።

የጋረድ መንጠራራት፤ በንግርቶቹ
 መተማመንና መኩራራት ለአክሊሉ
 በእንድ በኩል አስደሰተው። እንግዲህ
 እያፈገፍገበትም ትንቢት ቢኖረውም
 መጽሐፍ ገላጭ፤ ሰከራም ሽማግሌ፤
 ወላፋች ድባ ቶጣሪ የወሰተረውን ሁሉ
 እሜን ብሎ ተቀብሎታል። እንግዲህ
 የምትጭነው ዘውድ ገሀነም ተቀምጧል
 ቢሉት እውነት መሰሎት ሊወርድ
 ይቻላል። ቴዎድሮስን ለማጥፋት ከዚህ
 የተሻለ መሣሪያ የለም። (ገፅ 52)

ዘመቻ ከሌላም እንፃር የትልሙን ሂደት ውስብስብ
 ሚና አለው። የአዋጁ ዕለት በነበረው ንጉሣዊ ግብር ጊዜ

እክሊሉ የቴዎድሮስ ኃይል ምን ላይ እንደረፈና እሱን ለመግል ምን እንደሚያስፈልገው ይገመግማል። የሚደርስበትም መልስ ለሴራው መሰከት የገድ እንደገብርዬ ያሉትን የጦር መሪዎች ከንጉሡ በመነጠል እጋር ግድረግ የሚል ይሆናል። ገብርዬ የሴራው ተባባሪ ሲሆን ይችል ወይም አይችል እንደሆነ ለማወቅም የሸዋው ዘመቻ ጥሩ እጋጣሚ ለነእክሊሉ ይፈጥርላቸዋል። ገብርዬ በዘመቻው ጊዜ ቶስሎ አሁን ስለተኛ የልጅነት ጊዜ በልንጃርነታቸውን በማስታከክ እያዘወተሩ እቤቱ በመሄድ ይጠይቁታል። ሀሳቡንም ይሰልሳሉ። እንደ ቀን እሱ በንጉሡ ላይ ሲሸፍት ተይዞ እንደቀረበ ያየውን ሕልም ሲያወራሳቸው ሕልሙ እውን ቢሆንስ ኖር? እያሉ የልቡን ለማወቅ በጥያቄ ያዋክቡታል። እሱም ፈቱንም ደጋገመው ያለልግደቸው ቤቱ የሚሄዱት እንደ ነገር ፈልገው ነው እያለ ያስብ ነበርና ያሁኑን ጥያቄያቸውን እዝግምያ መጠርጠር ይጃምራል። እሱም እንደጠረጠራቸው ሲረዱ ሳይቀድግቸው ሊያጠፉት ይወስናሉ። ለውጥናቸው መሰከት የሚረዳቸውም ሌላ ዕድል እንደገና በሸዋው ዘመቻ ምክንያት ይከፈላቸዋል። ገብርዬ ለዘመቻው በሚዘጋጅበት ጊዜ ለትደርም ለፍቅርም እፍላ የነበረችው ከረዳ ሚስቱ በጦርነቱ ውስጥ እንደይዋትበት ስለሰጋች በሷን በደህና እንዲመለስላት ለቂምምቢ ገብርኄል ትሰላለች። አሁን ከቶስሉ እንደገገመም ለዐውደ ዓመቱ ዕለት ስለታቸውን ለማድረስ በልና ሚስት ወደ ቂምምቢ ይጓዛሉ። እካሄዳቸው ድንገት ስለነበረም ለቴዎድሮስ የሚሄደበትን ጉዳይ ለመንገር ሳያመቻቸው ይቀራል። እንግዲህ ይኼን እጋጣሚ በመጠቀም ነው እነእክሊሉ ገብርዬ የሸፈተ እስመስለው ንጉሡን በባለሟላቸው ላይ የሚዘምት ጦር በጋረድ እንዲመራ የሚያሳዝዙት።

ከላይ እንደተገለፀው የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ውስጥ ታሪካዊ የሆነው ሁኔታ (ለምሳሌም የሸዋው ዘመቻ፣ ወይም የጋረድ በቴዎድሮስ ላይ ግመፅ) እቀራረብ ልበለዳዊ ከሆነው ድርጊያ (ለምሳሌም የእክሊሉ የበቀል ዓመፅ) ጋር በትጡ እንዲዋሃድና ትልሙን እንዲያበለፅግ ሆኖ ነው። ለታሪክ ማስረጃነቱ ብቻ ሲባል በልበለደ ውስጥ የተደነቀረ ድርጊያ የለም። የድርጊያዎቹ እቀነጃጅትም እንደ ለሌለው በሚኖረው የቅርብ መንስኤነት እንጂ ደጃን የሚሆነውን የማህበራዊ እካባቢ ስዕል ለማጉላት በሚውል የማሟያ ዝርዝርነት አይደለም። ይህም በእንደ በኩል የልበለደን የሕብረተሰብ እድገት ጠባብ፣ የዓቢይ ገፅ በሕርያቱን ገፅታ ነጠላ የማድረግ እዝግምያ የሚኖረው ሲሆን በሌላ በኩል ደግሞ የእንባቢው ትኩረት በማሟያ ዝርዝሮች ላይ ሳይበታተን፣ ጉጉቱም

በጣልቃ ገብ ግዛናገያዎች ሳይበርድ፤ «ቀጥሎ ምን ይፈጠር ይሆን?» በማለት ልቡ እንደተንጠለጠለ እስከ መወረሻው ታሪኩን እንደከታተለ ይገፋፋዋል። የድርጊያዎቹ በእጫዊር ርቀት መከታተልም የትልሙን ዕድገት ፈጣን ከማድረጉም በላይ እንባቢው ከገፀ በሕርያቱ ይልቅ በድርጊያዎቹ ላይ እንደያተኩር ያደርገዋል።(3) ይህ ዓይነቱ የትልም እወቃቀርም ከገፀ በሕርያት ውስብስብነት ይልቅ የድርጊያዎች ጡዘት ለሚያረካቸው እንባቢያን ይበልጥ የተስማማ ይሆናል።

የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ ያለው የትልም እወቃቀር ከላይ ከተገለፀው በመጠኑ ለየት ያለ ነው። በእንደ በኩል የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ውስጥ የምናገኘው የነእክሊሉ ሴራ እዚህኛው ልበለድም ውስጥ ይሸረባል። በሌላ በኩል ደግሞ ትልሙን የበለጠ ውስብስብ ለማድረግ እዳዲስ ድርጊያዎች፣ ግጭቶችና ገፀ በሕርያት ተጨምረውበታል። የበፊቷ ቶንጀት አሁን «ታንጉት» ተብላ የቴዎድሮስ የእህት ልጅና የቅማንት ተወላጅ በመሆን ቀርባለች። የቅማንት ተወላጅ በመሆኗ በእናቷና በወንድ እያቷ መካከል በተፈጠረው መቀያየም ምክንያት ቴዎድሮስ ከታንጉት ጋር ያላቸውን ዝምድና በገሀድ እንደያሳውቁ ስለማሉ ይህ የሁለታቸውም ምስጢር ነው። ሆኖም መሐላውን በማታውቀው ታንጉት ላይ ዝምታው ውስጥ ውስጡን ያብሰለሰላታል። ለቴዎድሮስ ያላትን ታማኝነት ስለሚሸረሸረውም ለጠላቶቻቸው መሰሪያ ያደርጋታል። ቅማንትነቷ ከእንገዳ ሚስት ጋርም ያጋጫታል። በፊት ያልነበረውን የገብርዬን ከፍተኛ የልጅ ጉጉት ለማርካትም ስትል አሁን ከሌላ ሰው በድብቅ እስከመፅነስ ትደርሳለች። ይኸው ሁለተኛ ምስጢሯም ከነእክሊሉና የነሱ አባሪ ከሆኑት አቡኑ ጀሮ ስለሚደርስ ለሴራቸው መሰሪያ እንዲሆን የቴዎድሮስን የሕይወት ታሪክ ለእነስተርን እንድትነገር ማስፈራሪያ አድርገው ይጠቀሙበታል። ወይዘሮ ደብረም እነዚህን ምስጢራዊ ሥራዎች እንድትከናውን ሁኔታዎችን የማመቻቸት ሚና ይጫወታሉ። ወይዘሮ ሮዜንታልም የእስተርንን ጽሑፍ ለቴዎድሮስ በማጋለጥ የታንጉትን ስጋትና የንጉሠንና የሚሰዩናውያኑን ግጭት የግፋፋም ሚና ተሰጥቷታል። የታንጉት በድብቅ መፅነስና ለእስተርን የንጉሠን የግል ሕይወት መተረክ በጋላ እክሊሉ ከመቅደላው እስር ቤት ለማምለጥ እንድትረዳው ማስፈራርያ አድርጎ ይጠቀምበታል። ስለዚህ ታንጉት በየደረጃው የሚከሰቱትን የትልሙን ግጭቶች ማቆላለፊያ ሆና ስለቀረበች ቴዎድሮስንም ሆነ እነእክሊሉን ታጠላባቸዋለች። በዚህም ምክንያት የሷን ያህል ጎልተው የእንባቢውን ትኩረት አይስቡም።

ትልሙ እሁን የበለጠ ውስብስብ ሆኖ ቢቀርብም ነው። ምክንያቱም የእንባቢውን ትኩረት ለይ የሚሻሙና በዚሁም ላይ ቀጥተኛ ተጽዕኖ ዘርዘሮች ግልቃ እየገቡ ስለሚቀርቡ ነው። ለምሳሌ ደብረና የታንጉት ወደ ደልጊ ጉዞ፤ የተዋበችና ሞት፤ የቴዎድሮስና የቶንስል ከሚሩን ክርክርና ስና የጥሩ ወርቅ ጋብቻ፤ የቴዎድሮስና የምንትዋብ ዘርዘርነት ደረጃ የሚታዩ ሁነቶች ናቸው። በተለይም በቴዎድሮስ መካከል ያለው ግጭትና የቴዎድሮስና የትረካው እስከ መቅደሰው ውድቅት በመራዘሙ ስለረጀነታቸው ሲበል የተሠነቀሩ፤ ተውኔታዊ ረብዕ ዘርዘሮች ይመስላሉ። በደብረ ብርሃን ሥላሴ መቃብር ተርን ምን እንደሚያደርጉ ለማወቅ ስትል የወይዘሮ ይ መንጠላጠል እሷን መሳለቂያ ለማድረግ ካልታሰበ ደ ረብዕ የሌለው፤ ተዓማኒነት የሚጎድለው ድርጊያ መጽሐፍ የቀረበው የትረካው እስከ መቅደሰ ውድቅት ድርሰን እገዛዝ እወዳደቅና የዓለማቸውን መዉናገፍ ሪያዎቹ የልበለደ ሁለት ክፍሎች ውስጥ ከቀረቡት ና የተለየ ምንም ዓይነት አደስ ስዕል የማይሰጠን፤ መዉረሽ ለማሳወቅ ያህል የገባ ትርፍ ሐተታ ነው። ምድርስ ዕንባ በዝርዝሮቹ እመራረጡ ምግኔ በእቀራረባቸው ቅደም ተከተልም ኪናዊ ስልትን

ና የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ ያለው የገፀ ባሕርያት ረገድ ይመሰሰላል። ሁለቱም ውስጥ ያሉት ዐቢይ ገፀ ገነት ይገለቻል። እክሊሉ መሰሪ፤ ጋረድ ደፋር፤ ጀት (ታንጉት) ገራገር፤ ቴዎድሮስ ቁጡና ኃይለኛ ይሁን እንጂ የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ውስጥ ግንባር ያት እክሊሉና ጋረድ ቢሆኑም የታንጉት ሚስጥር በታ የያዘችው ታንጉት ናት። የሷ በዚህ ደረጃ የሚረዳው ትልሙን ይበልጥ ውስብስብ በማድረግ ቴዎድሮስን ዓለማ ምንነት ለማጉላትም ሆነ ሰየት የምትጫወተው ሌላ ሚና የላትም። ምናልባት

የደራሲው ሀሳብ ለ ወገኖቻቸው ብቻ ከሆነ ይኸን ሚና የሷ ዝምድና ለዚህ «የሷ ምስጢር ከሁ እንዲያተኩር ስለተ ዓለማቸውና ውድቅ እድርጋል። ከዚህ ተዓማኒነቷን በቅ ከማታውቀው ሰው ብሏት (ምስጢር እን እየተነገረን ሳለ) በ ሰው ጋር እንደገና የማንጠብቀውና የሚሰዩናውያኑና ቢ በማሳየት ላይ ስለተ ያዩ ቴዎድሮስን ለመመለስ የተደረገ ዕንባ ውስጥ ቴዎድ በመዉረሻው ላይ ስ ከልቡ ይፀፀታል። በ የፈፀመባቸውንም ምክንያት ነው። ስለ ይንፀባረቅበታል። የ ምንም ለውጥ የማይ ነገር ግን የሱ መሞ የለም።

የታንጉት ምስጢር ዘመናዊ እገር ለማድ እንጂ ከመኪንንቱ፤ በሚያደርጉት ክርክ የሚገለቸው፤ ተከ ግልፍተኛና ተሰዳ በ ለንደታቸው ማብረጃ

የደራሲው ሀሳብ ለቴዎድሮስ ዓለማ መጨናገፍ ምክንያት የሆኑት በዕደን ወገኖቻቸው ብቻ ሳይሆኑ የሥጋ ዘመዶቻቸው ጭምር ነበሩ ለማለት ከሆነ ይኸን ሚና የአጎታቸው ልጅ የሆነው ጋረድ ይበልጥ ያሟላዋልና የሷ ዝምድና ለዚህ ጭብጥ ትርፍ ነገር ነው። እንዲያውም እንበቢው «የሷ ምስጢር ከሁን አሁን ይጋለጥ ይሆን?» በማለት በሷ ላይ ይበልጥ እንዲያተኩር ስለተደረገ ቴዎድሮስ በአንፃሩ ደብዛዘ ሆነው እንዲሰሉና ዓለማቸውና ውድቀታቸው በሁለተኛ ደረጃ እንዲታይ የራሱን ተፅዕኖ አድርጓል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም የታንጉት ገፅ በሀርይ አቀራርፅም ተፃፃፊነቷን በቅጡ አሳገናፀፋትም። ለምሳሌ፤ እምባ ጊዮርጊስ ሄዳ ከማታውቀው ሰው ለመፅነስ መስማማቷና መብቃቷ፤ ይህም አልበቃ ብሏት (ምስጢሯ እንደይወጣበት ያለበትን ጭንቀትና ስጋት በተደጋጋሚ እየተነገረን ሳለ) በመቅደላ እምባ ገደኛዋ ስለወተወተቻት ብቻ ከሌላ ሰው ጋር እንደገና መደራቷ ከአንድ የቴዎድሮስ የቅርብ ባለሟል ሚስት የማንጠብቀውና ከፍርሃቷ ጋር የማይጣጣም ሁኔታ ነው። የሚሰዩናውያኑና ቤተሰቦቻቸው አሰሳልም ክፉ ገፅታዎቻቸውን አጉልቶ በማሳየት ላይ ስለተከረ ሚዛናዊነት የሚጎድለው ከመሆኑም በላይ እነሱ ያዩ ቴዎድሮስን ታሪክ አጥላልተው በመፃፋቸው የዚያን ብድር ለመመለስ የተደረገ ሙከራ ይመስላል። ደብተራ አክሊሉ የቴዎድሮስ ዕንባ ውስጥ ቴዎድሮስን ለማጥፋት ያደረገውን ትግል ያለመሰከት በመጨረሻው ላይ ሲገነዘብ በሕዝቡና በአገሪቱ ላይ በአደረሰው ጥፋት ከልቡ ይፀፀታል። በራሱ እነሳሽነት ቴዎድሮስን ይቅርታ የሚጠይቀውና የፈፀመባቸውንም በደል ታሪክ ለመተረክ የሚነሳው በዚህ ፀፀቱ ምክንያት ነው። ስለዚህም በአሰሳሉ የልውጤነት አዝማሚያ በትንሹ ይንፀባረቅበታል። የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ ግን እስከ ዕለተ ሞቱ ድረስ ምንም ለውጥ የማይታይበት እውነተኛው ሃሳይ መሲሕ ሆኖ ቀርቧል። ነገር ግን የሱ መሞት ለትልሙም ሆነ ለጭብጡ የሚጨምረው እርባን የለም።

የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ ቴዎድሮስ አሁንም ኢትዮጵያን ታላቅና ዘመናዊ አገር ለማድረግ ቅርጠው የተነሱ መሪ ሆነው ቀርበዋል። ይሁን እንጂ ከመኪንንቱ፤ ከአቡኑ፤ ከሚሰዩናውያኑና ከቅንሰል ከሚሩን ጋር በሚያደርጉት ክርክር የነገር ስልትና ዲፕሎማሲያዊ አቀራረብ የሚጎለቸው፤ ተከራክሮ ከማሰመን ይልቅ ለቁጣ የሚቸኩሉ፤ ግልፍተኛና ተሰዳቢ ሰው ሆነው ተሰለዋል። ቁጣቸው ሲፈነደም ለንደታቸው ማብረጃ ከሚጠቀሙባቸው ዘዴዎች ውስጥ አንዱ የግብረ

ሥጋ ገንጽነት መሆኑን ተረኪው ይገልፅዋል። (ገፅ 24 እና ገፅ 112ን ይመለከታል።) ከዚህ አንፃር የቴዎድሮስ ገፅ በሕርይ አሳሳቂ በሰቸው ላይ ቀደም ብለው ከተፃፉት የፈጠራ ሥራዎች አቀራረብ ለየት ይላል።(4)

ግስታወሽና የቢ መጻሕፍት

1. ምንም እንኳን ደራሲው አክሊሉን የልበለደ የና ተራኪ እንደሆነ ቢያቅድም ከምዕራፍ 1 ጀምሮ የምናገኘው ተራኪ በባህርዩ ሁሉናዋቂ እና ሁሉጋተገኝ በመሆኑ ዕቅድ በዚህ በኩል አልተሰካለትም። የታንጉት ምስጢር ውስጥ ገን ይህ ድክመት ታርጋል። ለተዉግሪ ግብራሪያ የሚቀጥለውን ይመለከቷል።Taye Assefa, "Form in the Amharic Novel" (Ph.D Dissertation, University of London, 1986), Unpublished, pp.116-120.

2. ስለደጃን ሐተታ አቀራረብና የድርጊያዎች ቅደም ተከተል ውጤቶች ይበልጥ ለመረዳት የሚከተለውን ጥናት ተመልከት።Meir Sternberg, Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction (Baltimore, 1978).

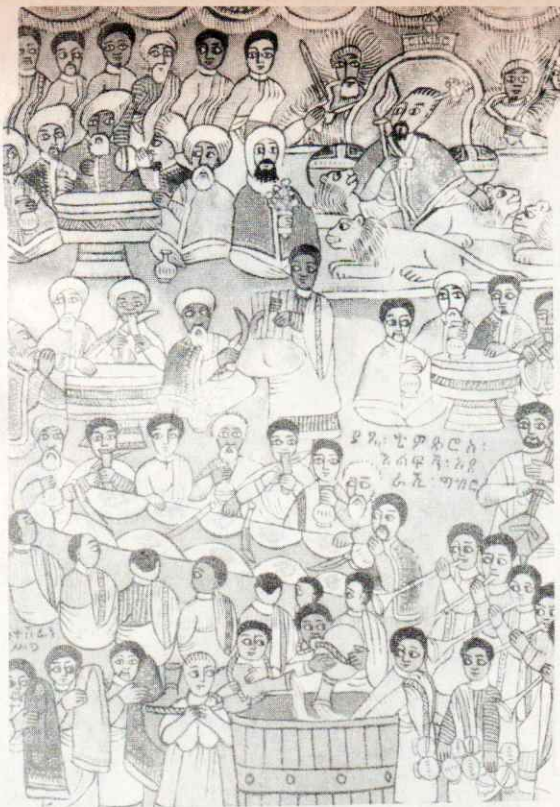
3. ለምሳሌ Edwin Muir የተባለው ሐያሲ The Structure of the Novel (London, 1957) በተባለው ጥናቱ ውስጥ የድርጊያ ልቦለድን በሕርያት ሲዘረዝር እንዲህ ይላል።

In a novel of action a trifling event will have unexpected consequences; these will spread, and soon they will be numberless; an apparently inextricable web will be woven which will later be miraculously unravelled. In the action, its complication and its resolution, our interest is taken up; and being interested we are pleased. As the figures are roughly characterised, however, the events will evoke responses from them as well as serve to complicate the action. But the action is the main thing, the response of the characters to it incidental, and always such as to help on the plot. The actors have generally such characters, and so much character, as the action demands. (pp. 20-21)

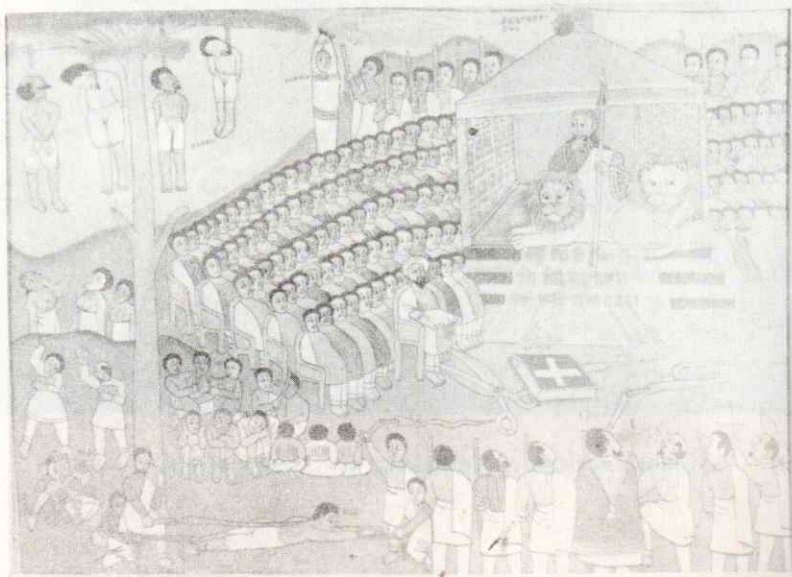
4 የኢትዮጵያ ደራስያን ቴዎድሮስን የምን ተምሳሌት አድርገው እንደሚያቀርቧቸው ለመረዳት የሚከተለውን ተመልከት።Taye Assefa, "Tewodros in Ethiopian Historical Fiction", JES, Vol. 16 (July 1983), pp.115-128.



Modern portrait of Téwodros, by Seyoum Wolde



Banquet at Téwodros's court, a traditional painting.



Téwodros's Tribunal, a traditional painting.



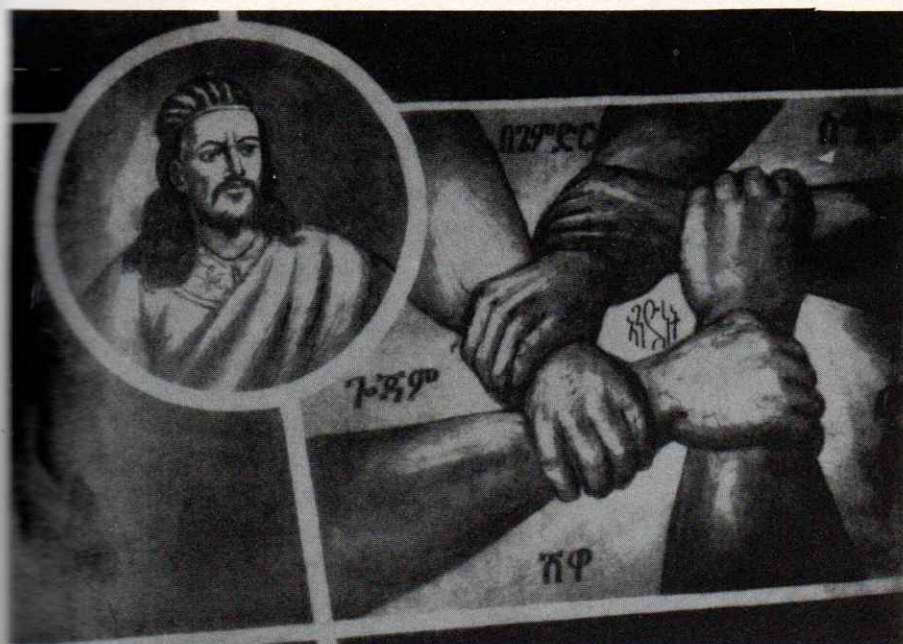
The Last Days of Téwodros, a traditional painting depicting the battle of Mäqdäla and the ruler's suicide, by Qāngéta Jämbäré.



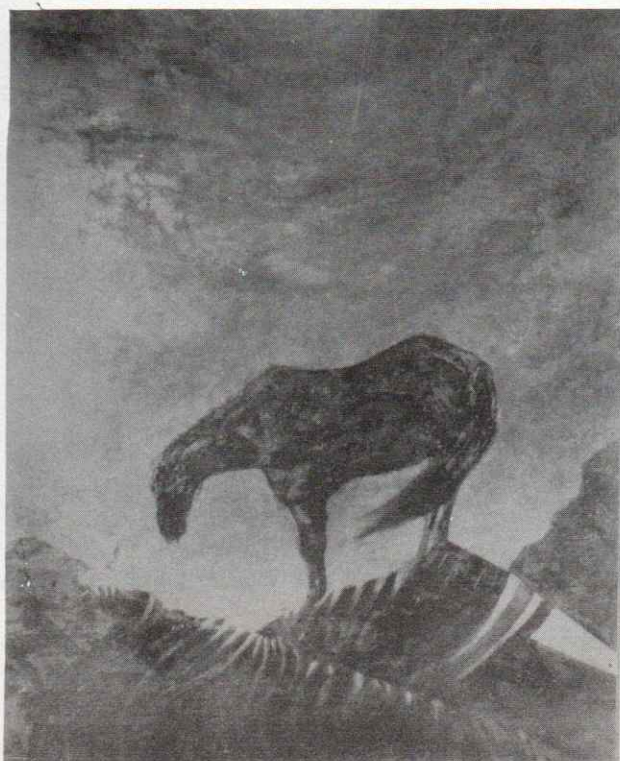
The Suicide, a traditional painting depicting also the British Commander Sir Robert Napier anachronistically saluting his foe.



'Alāmayyahu Téwodros: a contemporary photograph taken during his exile in Britain.



Téwodros and Ethiopian Unity: study for a postage stamp, by Maître-Artiste Afework Tekle.



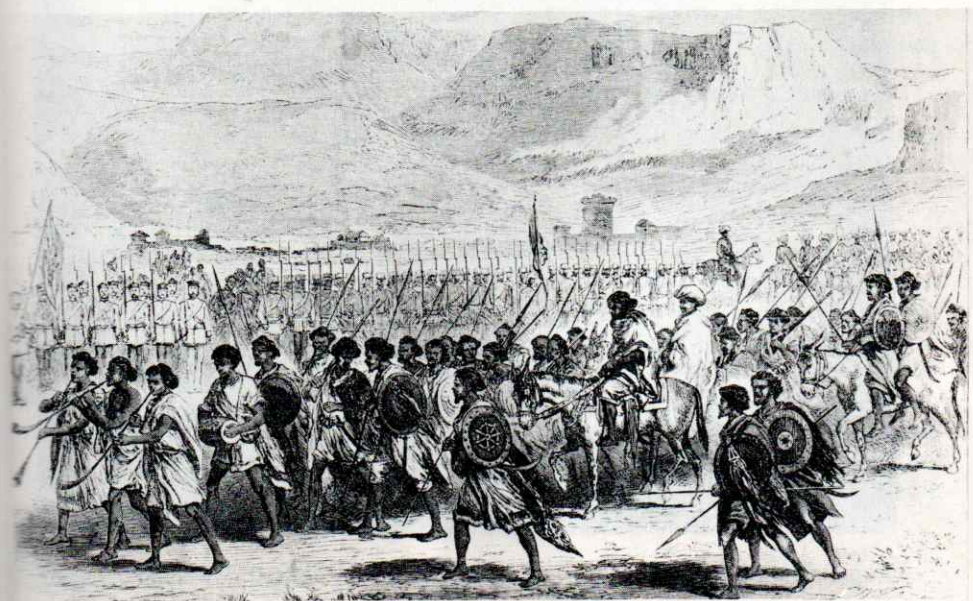
Mourning his Master, a modern painting by Tibebe Terfa.



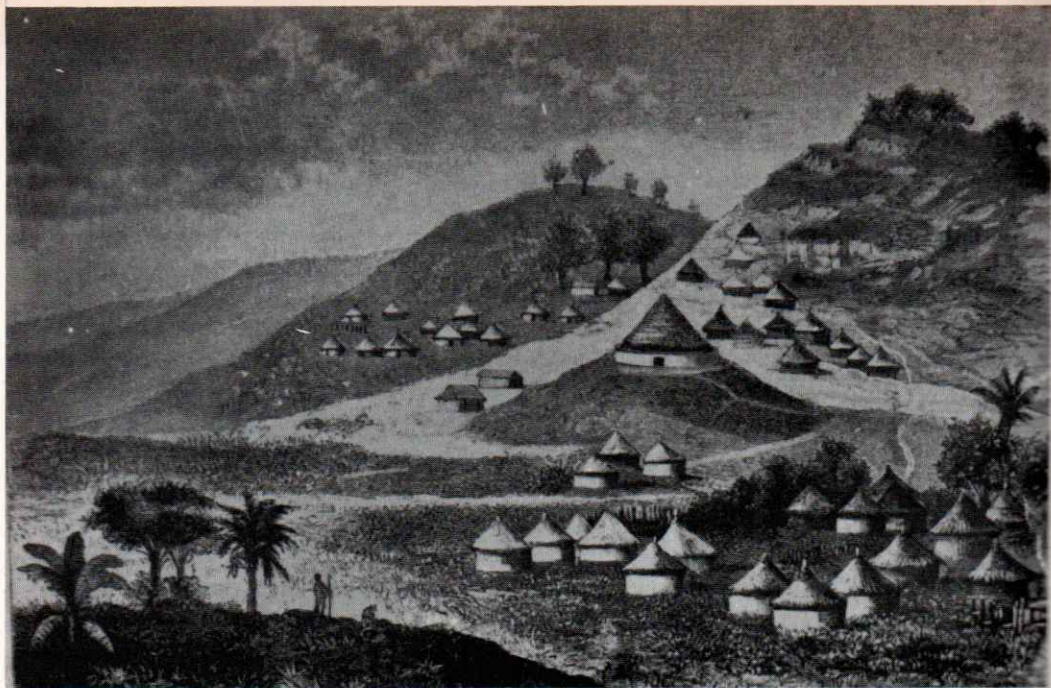
Yohannes IV with his son Ras Ar'aya Sellasé, a contemporary photograph.



Kasa, the future Emperor Yohannes, seated in state, a contemporary engraving from R. Acton, *The Abyssinian Expedition* (London, 1868).



Envoys of Kasa, the future Yohannes, arriving at Addigrat in 1868 to meet the British who are seen in the background, an engraving from Acton's *Abyssinian Expedition*.



Yohannes's palace at Däbrä Tabor, an engraving from G. Massaia, *I miei trentacinque anni di missione nell' alta Etiopia* (Milano, 1889).



The Battle of Mätamma, a traditional painting by Yätbaräk Haylä Maryam.

Tewodros II - The Hero of Past and Present

Joanna Mantel-Niecko

During the 1960s in the basement of Notre Dame Cathedral, an exhibition was held of the treasures of this famous church. Among the exhibits was a collection offered by Haile Selassie I - of ivory sculptures showing the heads of all popes. The canonized popes, as was usual, had halos above their heads. Surprisingly, this collection revealed that the number of popes canonized had clearly diminished through the centuries. In the first ages of Christianity nearly every pope wore this symbol of sainthood. As time passed, however, canonization of the popes became more and more rare, disappearing almost completely in modern times. One could ask: what had become of these popes? Who, according to Catholic doctrine, were and are God's representatives and substitutes on earth? Did they lose their godliness through time?

Let us now look at the gallery of saints down the centuries. We will see immediately that their number diminished in the same fashion as the number of canonized popes. Moreover, the reasons for sanctification changed through time. At one time, a pious man entered the ranks of the holy because of his exceptional capacity for mortifying his body. For example, St. Agapit held stones in his mouth for many years to avoid the sin of talkativeness. At another time a man became a saint through poverty, kindheartedness, charity and mercy on all living things, e.g. St. Francis of Assisi. At yet another point in time, canonization was granted to those who gave their own lives for the salvation of others (e.g. Maximilian Kolbe).

Is it God who is modifying His requirements from Man as far as the attainment of sainthood is concerned? Is it God who is diminishing the number of believers in the galaxy of saints? Definitely not.

The concept of sainthood gives expression to social notions regarding features admired of somebody and considered wonderful and qualities deserving of imitation. In other words - paragons.

The social notions of sainthood, i.e. this set of admired features and qualities, are not constant. In the process of time societies modify and these modifications are manifested in the change of conception regarding the role of religion in social and private life. Thus, what God approves of and what He requires become objects of human decision, while this human decision is conditioned by social imagination and social need at work in a given historical period. Once a given religion is well settled and its believers identify with its set of values the social need for saints tends to diminish. The galaxy of saints has almost reached its optimum level. The believers have at their disposal a sufficient number of heroic

saints to choose from - heroes to be admired, edifying examples to follow, miracle workers to protect and care for them. At this stage the period of search for religious values is nearing its end. The means of identification within this group of believers has already been built.

The religion, its values and its great personalities are not a unique means of formulating ties between the individuals in a social group. One can mention, for example, ethnogenetic myths. That is to say, myths concerning the origin of a given group. Myths of this kind, as a rule, proclaim the unique and wonderful nature of the group's origin, often at the same time declaring the group as God's chosen people. Thus the group is able to form the sense of being a social unit, favoured by miraculous origin and/or God's adoption, and distinct from other communities. The *Kebra Negest* is a good example of an ethnogenetic myth of this kind.

Once the group is well tied, organized and distinguished from others the social need for belief in its exceptional origins begins to fade. Ethnogenetic myths became fables, known more or less to everybody in the given society, but without their original meanings. They are no longer seriously believed.

Within the social group, with its established sense of identity, one can observe the appearance of needs other than those already mentioned. One need may be the house-genetic myth, a myth providing the expression of family self-respect - e.g. some families in the United States believing themselves to have originated from the "Mayflower". A further need may be for a social group hero, a hero representing the values considered by the given group as qualities worthy of appreciation and which then become values to be identified with.

The social needs for edifying examples are not things which are prescribed. Examples are chosen by the given group spontaneously. However, the group makes its choice subconsciously, the reasons for the choice have to be analyzed and defined for they are neither circulating in the social consciousness nor expressed.

With the above point of view in mind one can ask why Tewodros II became an Ethiopian popular hero, because according to my observations, he became such a hero only in the mid-twentieth century.

I will now continue with two provisos: 1. I did not investigate this problem scientifically, that is to say, from sociological perspectives. I am merely sharing some of my observations which (as is sometimes the case with sociological enquiries) may be incorrect; 2. I am an outsider, and an outsider's observations, as a rule, differ from those within a social group under observation.

Thus, according to my observations, Tewodros II became a popular Ethiopian hero in the mid-twentieth century. When this began, he was glorified by Ethiopian

intellectuals - novelists, playwrights, painters, etc. Today one can see his image on the walls of small restaurants in very small villages deep in the countryside. One can observe children spontaneously drawing his image on sheets of paper. Sunday evening and Monday morning broadcasts of Birhanu Zeryihun's novel *Ye-Tangut mist'ir* popularize him. And last but not least, this conference. Does it not pay tribute to him?

So we can ask: who was Tewodros II? Why is it that, from the huge galaxy of great personalities throughout the long history of the Ethiopian state, only *he* has become a popular hero? What qualities does he represent and what values does Ethiopian society today appreciate and desire?

Who was Tewodros II?

Most certainly he was brought up and educated according to the best traditions of the Ethiopian Church. He was a ruler who did not originate from either a noble family or the "Solomonic" dynasty. He considered himself a ruler with a special historical mission. This is testified by his choice of a nickname - Tewodros, and by his beloved name of *tabot* - Medhané Alem. Both names refer to the messianic Christian tradition of salvation and are associated with the meaning of "Saviour" or "Redeemer". He was a ruler who wanted both to unite Ethiopia and centralize power. An emperor who looked for a way to shape relations with Europe. He was a gifted warrior, a commander who knew how to win and attain the crown.

These things can be stated for sure. What can also be stated for sure is that he totally lost the game. The country he more or less united was once more disunited during the final period of his rule. Having shaped relations with Europe he then broke them off. Once loved by his soldiers the Commander was, at the last, abandoned by them completely. The events of Mekdela are tantamount to the total defeat of Tewodros. His internal and external policy in tatters, he sealed his defeat with his life.

What, then, is the subject of the events of Mekdela - fame? Or - glory? Or the defeat of - as S. Rubenson put it - a landless and people-less king? Or is it suicide?

Why has Tewodros II become a popular hero?

This is a very difficult question. I would like, however, to propose an answer. Not to answer but to *propose* an answer.

The life and rule of Tewodros was a struggle. A struggle with internal and external forces. The situation was difficult and full of contradictions. Tewodros had to choose. He had to choose the course to be taken between the complexity
had to choose. He had to choose the course to be taken between the complexity
had to choose. He had to choose the course to be taken between the complexity

of these contradictory forces. Here, in this group, I need not recall the facts. Tewodros looked for the proper course to take, he chose and this choice was ill-judged. Consequently, he lost. Internal forces allied with external forces rather than with him. The external force, i.e. Napier's army, and the internal force, i.e. those who let Napier's army pass on to Mekdela without trouble. Among this internal force were *Wag Shum* Gobeze from Lasta and Bezbiz Kassa from Tigray - two future emperors of Ethiopia: Tekle Giyorgis and Yohannis IV.

Tewodros, as mentioned, was searching. What was he searching for? Was he not searching for the shape of an Ethiopian state, as so many rulers of Ethiopia before him and after him? Was he the only in Ethiopian history to lose his game? No, he was not. This is not a unique characteristic of his. Dr. Merid showed us other examples of this kind yesterday. And yet, Tewodros was the only one to have committed suicide. In this *par excellence* Christian state, Tewodros, brought up in the Christian tradition, committed an unpardonable sin - suicide. And even so, he became a hero?

What kind of social need therefore glorifies him? I am not concerned here with historical realities. I am inquiring into social factors of myth-making.

Are these factors not inherent in Tewodros' unbroken inflexibility, the tenacity of his purpose to recover Ethiopian identity? Are they not inherent in his ultimate choice of dignity beyond humiliation, death rather than subjugation? But if it is so, we must realize that this is the way of the Samurai, the *hara kiri* ethic, which is very antagonistic to Christian morality. And yet this ultimate choice was made by a Christian emperor in a Christian society and has not been condemned by public opinion. Rather it seems to have been praised. Is it this *hara kiri*-like death and Samurai-like constancy to high principles which can be understood as an edifying example of the life-or-death struggle for an Ethiopian identity? Does this, then constitute the subconscious social need? If so, is this social need so profound that it can overcome the age-old Christian tradition which condemns suicide? Perhaps?

In modern Ethiopia, perhaps, the self respect and sense of honour represented by Tewodros have become much valued qualities, considered by society as worthy of appreciation and identification.

I do not pretend that this is a good interpretation. But, in our world of changing values and fleeting heroes - instance our examples of the canonized popes and saints earlier - perhaps it grants us a possible understanding of the qualities of Tewodros and, therefore, a possible understanding of his current fame.

Amanuel Sahle

The mind of man is made to think in symbols and metaphors which transcend the crudity of spoken language. Symbols and metaphors tend to assume exaggerated proportions in the abstract world of thoughts, for they are fettered neither by the limited faculty of speech nor circumscribed by the objective realities of the visible world.

Man thus tends to create a mythical world of his own where broken dreams, unfulfilled hopes, lost virtues and millennial expectations becloud his vision and distort his reasoning.

The hero, the dragon slayer, the martyr, the protector of the oppressed, the saviour who shall wipe away all tears and usher in a time of peace and prosperity always haunt the collective unconsciousness of people.

Thus the hero's courage in the face of death; his cunning bravery in battling against difficulties, his decisiveness in destroying evil, his boldness in humiliating the oppressor, such qualities get easily fitted into the universal mental mould of the race and assume such an overblown proportion that they tend to produce superhuman and outlandish individuals or legendary figures which make their existence in the national ethos of the people; and such phenomena help in the creation of metaphysical virtues, values and ideals that feed the fire of national pride in general and serve as a source of inspiration for the downcast, the confused and the disillusioned.

So why attempt to demythologize the lives and exploits of those whom we consider to be sources of patriotism and national pride?

To this question I would like to reply by saying that, to start with, even if one tries to demythologize a mythical figure, one usually fails in his effort; for legends are less about a person than about what that person symbolizes to the people as a whole. What is mythologized when the "hero" passes away are therefore his qualities and attributes, which are adorned, embellished and moulded in order to satisfy man's appetite for the supernatural and the mystical which are again difficult to detach from the person in question.¹

However, any attempt made to demythologize, although not universally successful, is a necessary move, because undue mythicising of a person or an event idealizes the "form" at the cost of the "content". And as people keep on sticking to the form rather than to the content, as a source of inspiration, the real

man behind the content vanishes and what remains is the form of an idol or a god, a creation of one's own imagination.

Now a problem arises the moment one takes the "idealized man" as a point of reference for weighing the merits and faults of his successors. If this is done, then the most laudable and meritorious deeds of his successors may even turn out to be the cause for indignation, confusion and disillusionment, because the qualities of the living have failed to measure up to the mythicized virtues of the idealized hero.

The last generation's "hero" should therefore be *demythologized* and *demythified* in as much as he is an obstacle to a genuine and objective evaluation of the merits of his successors. Only then can all the deeds, actions, intentions and purposes of his successors be weighed justly and fairly in their proper and objective perspective.

Theodros II, Emperor of Ethiopia (1855-1868) is the idealized hero par excellence. This forceful and charismatic figure has been a source of inspiration and awe to many of his contemporaries as well as to the present generation. Being "more amenable to creative writers because of the dramatic nature both of his actions and his personality"², Ethiopian writers have found in him all the virtues and valour of a great ruler and reformer and numerous biographies and dramas have been written about him. In Shiferaw Mengesha's የኢትዮጵያ የታሪክ ግዛት Theodros is portrayed as a consummate diplomat contemptuous of Europeans and their designs, far-sighted and having the administrative expertise of a 20th century statesman. He is further described as conscientious about his country's educational development.³ Ghermachew Tecklehawariat lauds him as a builder of modern and united Ethiopia.⁴ Teklezadik Mekuria writes that it was God's will that Theodros was sent to Ethiopia so that this country might live honoured, respected and feared by all.⁵

Sr. Manna in one of her M.A. dissertations portrays him as a unique ruler when she writes "He was the first of a new kind of ruler in Ethiopia, whose philosophy and policy would create a modern nation. In Theodore II, Ethiopia discovered a ruler very different from any that she had known for many years" "His death was a major catastrophe in Ethiopian history, for it brought to a sudden halt all his plans for the reunification and reform of the country. Yet Theodros' dream did not die. Among the young people of Ethiopia to-day, the same aspirations live on: equal opportunities for all, bold and progressive policies, and the unity and greatness of Ethiopia."⁷ His death has also been elevated to a station of martyrdom, a sacrifice, bordering to the saintly, a giving of one's life for the love of one's country.⁸

So from the above commentaries, eulogies and apologetics we behold a larger-than-life Theodros looming in the horizon. He is also portrayed elsewhere

as a scourge to feudal lords and priests, a devout Christian, a unifier, a reformer, an educator and one who stood for all that are cherished by the patriot and the revolutionary of his country.

Now in writing this paper the aim is not to disparage the deeds of so great a man as Theodros. That Ethiopia has never been the same after he left is doubtlessly true, and that his memory still remains with his people to inspire the patriot and the writer is equally true. Theodros did at least try to unite his country and to open the eyes of his reluctant people. He was a great warrior, undaunted by threats from internal and external enemies. He preferred suicide to humiliating captivity, and, as was his custom, never flinched for a second in taking drastic decisions even if that meant taking his own tormented life.

However, one should try to accept Theodros as he really was: an ambitious soldier, who destroyed in order to build. A victorious warrior, he deemed it only too natural to snatch the Ethiopian crown as no one was found fit to take it. As a king he found himself with a disunited, backward, feudal Ethiopia in his inexperienced hands. It seemed therefore that Theodros got more than he had bargained for when he became king. Trained to fight but not to administer, to shout out orders but not sit in counsel, he lived to see his plans go up in smoke. "His effort to reunite the country, successful to a degree, might have met with greater success had he been content to supply his talents to wise, firm rule rather than the relentless pursuit of further conquest. But his lust for power led him to exhaust his strength in continual warfare".⁹

One, therefore, must try to discern the real adventurous soldierly Kassa in the farsighted modernizer known as Theodros of Ethiopia. Kassa Hailu was an ambitious and adventurous warrior. As an ambitious general, with little knowledge about Europe, he developed a knack for things modern, especially when these meant modern instruments of war. In fact "one of the emperor's greatest ambitions was to manufacture guns and for this reason he was most anxious to attract foreign craftsmen to his country."¹⁰ Theodros was a soldier king who never cared about palaces and all the pomp that went with them. He was careless about his manners and his clothes and was more himself when in camps and battlefields. "He hated houses of all kinds and habitually lived in a tent"¹¹ This hatred for palaces and fixed capitals had an indirect bearing on his administrative output. Theodros ruled as only a war-lord could rule. His effort to destroy the *Rases* could be explained by the fact that these princely rulers, remnants of the *Zemene Mesafint*, simply stood in his way. Thus, in his zeal to unite, he was, more often than not, inclined to destroy and in his unifying campaigns traditional or social considerations were given the least attention.

Theodros' cruelty could only be explained when we see him as a war-lord who became emperor of Ethiopia in spite of himself. He knew too well that he was a usurper and this his countrymen knew this as well. His lowly and humble origin

coupled with the fact that he had no royal Solomonic lineage made him touchy and irascible. He hated the church whose covenant seemed to have already been sealed with the descendants of Solomon. He hated the *Rases* who knew his origin and scorned his unifying programs. A sort of *folie de grandeur* thus seized his mental faculties. He started to have illusions about himself and about his greatness before man and before God. But neither his people nor his English friends took him seriously. Even the wife he loved very much, Woizero Terunesh, "looked on her husband as a 'parvenu', and took no pains to hide from him her want of respect and affection."¹³

Kassa was thus a victim of a sad combination of circumstances. The warrior in him took predominance over any diplomatic or administrative skills he might have acquired over the years. Henry Blanc quotes Plowden who writes "The worst points in his character are his violent anger at times and his unyielding pride as regards his kingly and divine right."¹⁴

He developed his own brand of Christian virtue, where he was sometimes a slave of Christ and at an other time he prayed to God to take him back before he destroyed the whole country.¹⁵ He never even winced at the idea of calling himself Shaykh when addressing letters to neighbouring Moslem rulers. Rubenson writes "As far as I know, Kassa Hailu was the only Christian prince to use [Shayk] in writing in nineteenth-century Ethiopia"¹⁶ And finally the wanton killing of 100,000 cows left to rot in the plains of Debre Tabor,¹⁷ was an evil consequence of his superstitious and capricious nature.

Theodros' intentions to unite and modernize the country were the intentions of a warrior lord and not that of a statesman or an administrator. He hated certain nationalities, certain minorities and creeds. "The declared enmity of Theodros to Islam and to the Galla also drove a good part of the population to the camp of his enemies"¹⁸ And when he died at Maqdala "he left Ethiopia as disunited as he found it"¹⁹

It was his inability to reconcile his bellicose and soldierly nature with that which was required of an anointed king of an historic and traditional Ethiopia, that drove him to overact and to commit acts of violence far and beyond the call of national duty.

The plain truth is, therefore, that Theodros was violent and capricious. "Tzegaye's argument for not showing the violence of Tewodros [in his plays] is that this has already been overdone by foreign writers with the aim of tarnishing his reputation and destroying his image."²⁰ But the writings of foreigners should not in any way sway one's emotional and mental moods. One biased representation of an individual should not incline us to commit another biased representation in the opposite direction.

Kassa Hailu was a bold, strong-willed, valiant, decisive and intelligent personality. These were his real qualities, and it is these qualities that we, as true sons of Ethiopia, should try to emulate. But his wanton killings and senseless destruction, his hatred for certain nationalities and creeds, and lastly his diplomatic imbroglios and suicide at Maqdala, are some of the national historical scars which only the memory of the Lion of Maqdala with his humble virtues and "heroic" vices could erase from the minds of those who still cherish his legend.

NOTES

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3. ሸፈራው መንገሽ፣ የኢትዮጵያ የተሪክ ገዢ፣ ብርሃንና ሰላም፣ አደስ አበባ፣ 1965፣ ገጽ 109
4. ገርማቸው ተክለሃዋርያት፣ ቴዎድሮስ፣ ብርሃንና ሰላም፣ አደስ አበባ፣ 1969፣ ገጽ 6
5. ተክለአጳድት መኮሪያ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ተሪክ ከአጼ ቴዎድሮስ እስከ ቀ.ጋ.ሥ.፣ ብርሃንና ሰላም፣ አደስ አበባ፣ 1972፣ ገጽ 1
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7. _____, "The New Policy and Philosophy of Theodros II", *Ethiopian Journal of African Studies*, (1984), III, No.2, IV, No.1.
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10. R. Pankhurst (ed.), *The Ethiopian Royal Chronicles* (Addis Ababa, 1967). p.152-3.
11. F. Myatt, *The March to Magdala*, (London, 1970), p.31.
12. R. Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, p.151.
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15. J.B. Coulbeaux, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Abyssinie*, (Paris, 1929), p.426.
16. S. Rubenson, "Shaykh Kassa Hailu", *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Uppsala, 1984), pp.279-84.

17. Blanc, *op. cit.*, p.336.
18. M. Abir, *Ethiopia, The Era of the Princes*, (London, 1968), p.184.
19. S. Rubenson, *King of Kings, Tewodros of Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa, 1966), p.90.
20. Taye Assefa, *op. cit.*, p.120.

PART IV

TREASURES OF MÄQDÄLA

PART IV

THE HISTORY OF ALABAMA

የቴዎድሮስ አማሚትና የመቅደሳው ዘረፋ

ግርማ ኪዳኔ

የመወረሻው የመቅደሳ ግብግብ ሰኞ ሚያዚያ 6 ቀን 1860 ዓ.ም. ወደማቶሙ ተቃረበ። የእንግሊዝ ጦር ሠራዊት ቴዎድሮስን እድገ ለመያዝ በየአቅጣጫው መረገጥ ጀመረ። የቴዎድሮስን ሁኔታ አስመልክቶ የኒውዮርክ ታይምስ ሪፖርተር እስታንሊ(1) ሲናገር ሰኞ ከቀኑ አሥር ሰዓት አካባቢ እንግሊዝ በመቅደሳ ላይ ከሠማራቻቸው ወታደሮች መካከል ሁለት የአይረሽ ወታደሮች የተኩስ ድምጽ ወደሰሙበት አቅጣጫ እየተከለረሰፉ እንደደረሱ፤ አንድ ያልታወቀ ኢትዮጵያዊ ከመሬት ላይ ተዘርሮ ለመሞት በማጣጣር ላይ እንደሰ ያገኙታል። የግለሰቡ ጣር ስሜት ሰይሰጣቸው ቀድሞውንም ከኛ የተሰረቀ ነው በማለት በቀኝ እጁ አቅጣጫ የወደቀውን ሽጉጥ አንስተው ይወስዷቸዋል። ይህ አልበቃ ብሎአቸው የጣቱን የወርቅ ቀለበትና የእንገቱን የወርቅ መስቀል ይዘርፉታል። (2) ከዚያም የወሰዱትን ሽጉጥ እያገለበጡ በማድነቅ ሲመለከቱ ከጉን በኩል ከብር ተቀርጾ የተለበደ ጽሑፍ ያገኙበታል። ጽሑፉም «እንደ ኢ.አ. 1854 ለአሽከሬ ለፕላውደን የአቢሲኒያው ንጉሥ ቴዎድሮስ ሳይረጉለት ቅንነት የተመለሰበት ደግነት ያለኝን እድናቶት ለመግለጽ ከታላቋ ብሪታንያና የአይርላንድ ንግሥት ቪክቶሪያ የተላከ ሰጦታ» የሚል ነበር። (3)

ወታደሮቹ ጽሑፉን ከነበቡ በኋላ ከነከናቸው። እንደኛው ወታደር ቴዎድሮስ ይህን እንዴ?(4) በማለት ነፍሱ ልትወጣ የተቃረበውን ግለሰብ ማስተዋል ጀመረ። ምናልባትም ወታደሮቹ ሊለዩአቸው ያልቻሉበት ሌላው ምክንያት እጹ ቴዎድሮስ በጠላት መወረራቸውን እንደተረዱ ከቤተሰቦቻቸውና ከቅርብ ተከታዮቻቸው ጋር ተሰናብተው በሽጉጥ እራሳቸውን መተው እንደወደቁ ጠላቶቻቸው እሳቸው መሆናቸውን እንደይለዩአቸው በማለብ ወልደ ጋብር የሚባለው የቤት አሽከራቸው የሚደርሷትን ባለቀጭን ጥለት ነጠላቸውንና ታጥቀውት የነበረውን ባለከፋይ ቀበቶአቸውን አውልቶ በመውሰድ ቁጥራቸው አስራአምስት ያህል ከሚሆን ከቴዎድሮስ ጭፍሮች ጋር በማምለጥ ተሸሽጎ እንደነበር ለእንግሊዝ አፈሰሮች በሰጠው ቃለመጠይቅ ላይ

ተጠቅሷል።(5) ሌላው ቴዎድሮስ መሆናቸው ያልታወቀበት ምክንያት አለባቸው ተራ ኢትዮጵያዊ ከሚለብሰው ልብስ የተለየ ባለመሆኑ ነበር። በተለይም ባዶ እገራቸውን ያለጫማ መታየታቸው ብቻ ሳይሆን፤ ከደረታቸው ሰፋትና ከትከሻቸው ትልቅነት በስተቀር ቁመታቸው መካከለኛ እንጂ ረዥምና ገዢ ባለመሆኑ፤(6) እኒያ በሀገራቸው ላይ ተነስተውባቸው የነበሩትን ሽፍቶች ከመደምሰስ አልፈው ተርፈው በጄኔራል ናፒየር የሚመራውን ዘመናዊ የእንግሊዝ ጦር እጅን አልሰጥም በማለት በድንገት የወደቁ ታላቅ እንበሳ መሆናቸውን ከቶውንም ለማመን አልቻሉም ነበር።

ይህ በእንዲህ እንደሰ መቅደስ በእንግሊዝ ጦር ሠራዊት ቁጥጥር ሥር ሆነች። ቀደም ሲል የቴዎድሮስ እስረኞች የነበሩትም ኢትዮጵያውያን በግርግር የታሰሩበትን ቤት በመስበር የእግር ብረታቸውን መሬት እየጎተቱ በአደባባይ መታየት ጀመሩ።(7) ከፊሉም እንግሊዞች ወደሰፈሩበት ከምጥ በመሄድ ተቀላቀሉ።

ወዲያውኑ እንደ ግለሰብ እየሮጠ ሄደ የጄኔራል ናፒየር የቅርብ ረዳት ለነበረው ለሰር ቻርልስ እስቴቭሊ «እዚያ እንድ ግለሰብ ተዘርጋል፤ ሰዎች ቴዎድሮስ ነው ይላሉ፤»(8) በማለት ሪፖርት ያቀርባል። እስቴቭሊ ግን በነገሩ ሙሉ በሙሉ አላመነበትም ነበር። በዚህም ምክንያት ይህ ማንነቱ ያልታወቀውን ሬሳ በቃሬዝ ላይ በማድረግ እምጥቶ ለማሳየት በማሰብ ግለ ሰቡ ሬሳው ወደ ነበረበት ሥፍራ ተመልሶ ሄደ። ጭካኔ በተመለሰበት አኳኋን ሁለት እግሮቻቸውን በመጎተት ለቃሬዝ መሸከሚያ ተብሎ ከተሠራው የእንጨት ርብራብ ላይ እንደጣሉባቸው ሦስት ጊዜ ከቃሰቱ በኋላ ህይወታቸው ልታልፍ ችለዋል።(9) ይህንን ድርጊት አስመልክቶ ማርክህም ሲያብራራ «ወታደሮቹ የእጼ ቴዎድሮስን ቃሬዝ ተሸክመው ለሰርቻርልስ ለማሳየት እንደደረሱ ታሰረው የተፈቱት እስረኞች በመሸቀደም መጀመሪያ መልካቸውን አተኩረው ከዩ ሰኋላ እንድ ነገር ትዝ አላቸውና የግራ እጃቸውን ከፍ አድርገው ጣታቸውን ማየት እንደጀመሩ እንደኛው ጣታቸው ሰበራ(10) ሆኖ አገኙት። እጼ ቴዎድሮስ ገና በወጣትነታቸው ዘመን ጎጆም ላይ በጥይት ጣታቸው ላይ ተመተው(11) ስለነበር የተቀረጠውን ጣት ስላዩ፤ ቴዎድሮስ መሆናቸውን አረጋገጡ። ይሁን እንጂ አሁንም ቢሆን ሬሳው የእጼ ቴዎድሮስ ስለመሆኑ የቀረበው ማስረጃ በእንግሊዝ የጦር መኩንኖች ዘንድ አጠራጣሪ ስለመሰለ እጼ

ቴዎድሮስ በሕይወት ሰሉ የሚያውቃቸው የነበረው ራሱም መጠቀሚያ እንዲያያቸው ተደረገ። (12) ብዙ ሰዶቶይ ራሱም ወዲያው እየሮጠ መቶ ሲያያቸው እንደ ቴዎድሮስ ሆነው አገኛቸው። ምንም እንኳን በሱና በእንደ ቴዎድሮስ መካከል አልፎ አልፎ አለመገባባት ቢፈጠርም ቅራጥ መሪ መሆናቸውን ጠንቅቆ ያውቅ ስለነበረ ሁኔታውን እንደተመለከተ መንፈሱ ተረበሸ። በተለይም ከመሞታቸው በፊት የተናገሩት ቃል ትዝ አለው። ይኸውም «እንድ ቀን እኔ ሰሞት ታየኝ ይሆናል፤ ከዚያም በራሳዬ ላይ ቶመህ ይህን ደካማ ሰው በመቅበር ፋንታ ከሜዳው ላይ እንደወደቀ በሰብሰ መቅረት አለበት በማለት ትረገመኝ ይሆናል» (13) ብለው የተናገሩት ትዝ እያለው በሀዘን ተውጦ ይታይ ነበር።

የእንደ ቴዎድሮስ መሞት በይፋ እንደታወቀ የእንግሊዝ ወታደሮች ደስታ በተመለከተ ሁኔታ በንደራቸውን በማውለብለብ በመቅደላ ተራራ ላይ ውሸታቸውን አስተጋቡት። (14) ብሔራዊ መዝሙራቸውንም አሰሙ። (15) በቴዎድሮስ እጅ ታስረው የነበሩትም እስረኞች ሟቹ ራሳ አካባቢ የፈንጠዝያ ግብዣ ለማድረግ ከያሉበት ተጠራሩ። (16) የሟቹንም ገጽታ ለማየት የሚጎርፈው ሕዝብ ብዛት እየወመረ መጣ፤ ሕዝቡም ራሳውን በደንብ ለማየት እንዲችሉ ወደሜዳ ተጎትቶ ተቀመጠ። (17) ዙሪያውንም በመከበብ ርቃነ ሥጋቸው እስኪታይ ድረስ የለበሱትን ልብስ ከብዙ በታ ተለተሉት። (18)

በወቅቱ የእይን ምስክር በመሆን ያረጋገጠው አሜሪካዊ ሪፖርተር ህይወታቸው ስለሰፈቸው የመቅደላ ጃግና ሲያብራራ የተለየ ክብር ሳይደረግላቸው፤ «ጠባቂ ዘብ በአጠገባቸው ሳይቆም፤ በቃራዝ ላይ ለብዙ ሰዓት ያህል ከመሬት ተዘርረው፤ ፀጉራቸው ተሸልቶ፤ ልብሳቸው ተገፍና ተቀዳደ ከፊል እርቃነሥጋቸውን በማየቴ የቀድሞው ቴዎድሮስ መሆናቸው አጠራጠረኝ» ይልና፤ «ራቅ ብዬ ስመለከት ብዙ አፈሰሮች በደም የተበከለውን የቴዎድሮስን ሽሚዝ ለኔ ይገባኛል በማለት ሲገተቱና ሲጣሉ ተመልክቼ ነበር።» (19) ብሎ ንግግሩን ይደመድማል።

ስለሆነም በዚያን ጊዜ ቴዎድሮስ ሲነገሱ ለብሰውት የነበረው የክብር ልብስና በእንጻፋ ደግሞ ከሞቱ በኋላ የተወሰደባቸው በደም የተበከለችው ሽሚዝ በእንግሊዝ አገር ራቅ በሰ ሰሜናዊ ክፍል «ባንክ ፊልድ ሙዚየም» ሀሲፋክስ ዩክሼር ተብሎ በሚጠራው መዘክር ውስጥ

ሲገኝ የተሸለተው ፀጉራቸው ግን ለንደን ከተግ ናሽናል ወር ሙዚየም ውስጥ እንግሊዞች እጉል ጀብደኝነታቸውን ለማስታወስ ብለው አስቀምጠውታል።

ይህንን አስነዋሪ ድርጊት ያስተዋለ እንድ ታዛቢ የቴዎድሮስ ራሳ ከፈለ ርቃኑን ስለነበረ የሰው መሳቂያ ሆኖአል በማለት ለናፒየር ተናገረ። (20) ናፒየር ግን የተሠራው አስነዋሪ ሥራ እንድ ወታደር ከሚያደርገው የዲሲፒሊን ስነሥርዓት አሠራር ውጪ መሆኑን እየተገነዘበ እንደችም የቅጣት እርምጃ ሳይወስድ ቃረዘው እንዲለብስና በማግለቱ ለቀብር እንዲዘጋጅ የሚል ትዕዛዝ ሰጠ። (21) ሆኖም ይህ ከመፈጸሙ በፊት በስዕል መልክ ፎቶግራፍ እንዲነሱ ተደረገ። ከመግባት ተልእኮ ሌላ በስዕል በመሰል ልዩ ሙያ የነበረው የብሪቲሽ ሙዚየም ተወካይ ሪቻርድ ሆምስ (22) በደረቅ እርሳስና ብሩሽ እማካይነት ስሎ አቀረበ። የሰለውም ስዕል ትክክለኛውን የቴዎድሮስን መልክ የያዘ እንደነበረ የቴዎድሮስን አሟሟት ለመመርመር ከተገኘው ሀኪምና በሚስተር ራሳም ተረጋገጠ። (23) ከዚያም በኋላ ቀደም ሲል ጠቅላይ የጦር አዛዥ እንደዘዘው ሁሉ በሚስተር ራሳም እማካይነት ቃረዘው ከስፍራው ተነስቶ የእንግሊዝ እስረኞች ይኖሩበት ከነበረው ግቢ ፒትር ተብላ ከምትጠራው ጎጆ (24) ውስጥ ለቀብር እንዲዘጋጅ ተደረገ።

የቀብሩ ሥነ ሥርዓት ከመፈጸሙ በፊት ስለአሟሟታቸው በሐኪሞች የተደገፈ ማስረጃ ማግኘት ያስፈልግ ስለነበረ ዶ/ር ብላንክና የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ የንስሐ አባት በተገኙበት ዶ/ር ለምስዳይን (25) እስከራኑን መርምረው ያገኙት ውጤት «በጥይት የተመታ ቁስል ከበስተኋላ በኩል ጭንቅላታቸው ላይ ሲታይ፤ እንደዚሁም ከአፋቸው ውስጥ ጠቆር ብሎ ጉድጉድ ያለ ቁስል ይታይበት እንደነበረ፤ የሽጉጣቸውን አፈመዝ ከአፋቸው አጉርሰው የተኩሱት ጥይት በአፋቸው ጣራ በኩል አድርጋ የኋላ ጭንቅላታቸውን አልፋ የወጣች በመሆኑዋ ንጉሡ ራሳቸውን በራሳቸው እንደገደሉ የሚመሰክር ነው በማለት አረጋገጠ። (26) የምርመራው ውጤት ከበቃ በኋላ ዶክተር ሄንሪ ብላንክ እንዲህ ብለው ተናገሩ። «ስሜቴን በጣም የቀለቀለው የሟቹ የቴዎድሮስ ራሳ ነበር። (27) የቴዎድሮስ ራሳ ፈገግ ብሎ ይታያል፤ የዚህ ዓይነቱ ደስታ የተመለከበት ፈገገታ ከአጼ ቴዎድሮስ በቅርብ ጊዜ በሀይወታቸው ሳሉ አይታይባቸውም ነበር። ይህም ሁኔታ ፀጥታ የተመለከበት ብዙ አስደናቂ ሥራዎችን ያከናወኑ፤ ታላቅነትና

ጨካኝነታቸውም በታሪክ ውስጥ ተወደደሪ የሌለውን የሰው ቅርጽ የያዘ በሕይወታቸው ማለፊያ ጊዜ የወጣትነታቸውን ወራት፣ በጀግንነት ያደረጉ እቸውን ውጊያዎችና አሁንም ራሳቸውን በራሳቸው መግደላቸውን አስበው መደሰታቸውን ያሳያል።»

ምንም እንኳን ጆኔራል ናፒየር የአጼ ቴዎድሮስን ራሳ ለቀብር እንዲዘጋጅ ብሎ ትዕዛዝ የሰጠ ቢሆንም የት በታና በእንዴት ያለ ቀብሩ እንደሚከናወን ገና አልተወሰነም ነበር። ይህም ጉዳይ ለግኝ በለቤት ለእቴጌ ጥሩወርቅ በጥያቄ መልክ ቀርቦላቸው ሲመልሱ(28) ግን በግል ቤተክርስቲያናቸው ውስጥ ፍትሃተ ፀሎት እንዲደረግላቸው ይፈቀድ ይሆናል የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ» በማለት የተናገሩት በጆኔራል ናፒየር በኩል ተቀባይነት በማግኘት(29) የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ ራሳ በጉጆው ውስጥ እንደሰ በነጭ ጨርቅ እንዲጠቀለል ተደረገ።(30) ከዚያም በወርቀዘቦ ያሸበረቀ የሀገር ልብስ ከለበሰ በኋላ በአልጋ ላይ ተደርጎ ወደ ቀብር አመራ።(31) የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ የውስጥ ጠላቶች አደጋ ሊያደርጉባቸው ይችላሉ በሚል ስጋት ባለቤታቸው እቴጌ ጥሩወርቅና የሰባት ዓመት ሕፃን ልጃቸው ደጃዝማች ዓለማየሁ በቀብሩ ሥነ-ሥርዓት ላይ አልተገኙም ነበር።(32) ይሁን እንጂ የቅርብ ዘመዶቻቸውና ጥቂት መኩንኖች በተገኙበት በሕይወታቸው ሳሉ መቅደስ ላይ አሠርተውት በነበረው በመድሃኔ ዓለም ቤተ ክርስቲያን ሥርዓተ ፀሎት ተደርጉላቸው ከእቤት ሰላማ መቃብር አጠገብ(33) በተወለዱ በሃምሳ አመታቸው ሚያዚያ 6 ቀን 1860 ዓ.ም. የቀብር ሥነ-ሥርዓታቸው ተፈጸመ።

ዘ ረ ፋ

እንደ እንግሊዝ ጦር አዛዦች አባባል ተልዕኮአቸው የእንግሊዝ እስረኞችን ለማስፈታት ነበረ። ከዚህ የተልዕኮ ሽፋን በስተጀርባ ግን ዓለማቸው እጅግ በጣም ብዙ የሆኑ ታሪካዊና ባህላዊ ይዘት ያላቸውን ቅርሶች ለመዝረፍ ጭምር መሆኑ የሚያጠያይቅ አይሆንም።

፩ኛ ሪቻርድ ሆምስ የተባለው የብሪቲሽ ሙዚየም ተወካይ ከእንግሊዝ ጦር ጋር አብሮ እንዲመጣ መደረጉ ለዚህ የዘረፋ ተግባር መሳካት እንደነበረ፤ ግልጽ ነው።

፪ኛ የእንግሊዝ ወታደሮች በቴዎድሮስ ራሳ ላይ የተረባረቡት ለምን ይሆን በማለት ራሳችንን ስንጠይቅ የምናገኘው መልስ ምናልባትም ሳይግረኩ ራሳቸውን ገድለው በመገኘታቸው የተነሳ በእንግሊዞች በኩል የመበቀል ሁኔታ እንፀባርቅ ሊሆን ይችላል፤ በሰበቡ ግን ዘረፋ መፈጸማቸው እይካድም።

በቴዎድሮስ ገናናነትና እልበገር ባይነት የተነሳ ከሁን እሁን ሽንፈት ይደርስብን ይሆናል በማለት የመንፈስ ጭንቀት ያደረባቸው የእንግሊዝ ወታደሮች የእጹ ቴዎድሮስን መወረሻ እስካላወቁ ድረስ ለዘረፋ ሊሰማሩ አልቻሉም ነበር። ውሎ አድር ግን ንጉሡ ራሳቸውን መግደላቸው በይፋ እንደተገለጸ ወደ ዘረፋ ተገባራቸው በቡድን በመሆን በየአቅጣጫው ተሰማሩ።

የመጀመሪያው የዘረፋ ቡድን ያተኮረው በሟቹ ንጉሥ ራሳ ላይ ነበር። የእንገት መስቀልና የጣት ቀለበታቸውን፤ ሽግግራቸውንና ሽጉጣቸውን ከመዝረፋቸውም በሻገር ሹሩባቸውን ሳይቀር ሸልተው የወሰዱ ለመሆኑ በታሪክ መዘግብት መረዳት ይቻላል።

ሁለተኛው የዘረፋ ቡድን ያተኮረው የቤተመንግሥት ሕንጻ በመድፈር ነበር። ንጉሡ በሕይወታቸው ሳሉ ብሔራውዊ ቤተ መጽሐፍት ለማቋቋም የሰበሰቡትን እጅግ በጣም ብዙ የሆኑ መጽሐፍቶችን(34) እንደዚሁም በሁኑ ጊዜ የብሔራዊ ቤተ መዘግብት መሠረት ሊሆኑ የሚችሉ እያሌ የመንግሥት ሰነዶችንና የተለያዩ መረጃዎችን ሳይቀሩ ዘርፈዋል። ከነዚህም መካከል የእጹ ቴዎድሮስ ዘውዶችና ማሕተም፤ በተለይም ከብረ ነገስት የተባለው ታላቁ መጽሐፍ ይገኙባቸዋል።(35) ቀጥለውም ወደ ንጉሡ ነገሥቱ ማድቤት ውስጥ በመገባት ወደ ሃያ እንሥራ የሚሆን የተጠመቀ ጠጅና የእህል እረቂ ዘርፈው ከመጠን በላይ ሰብረው ነበር። ከዘረፋቸው ቅርሶች ይልቅ ጥፋት ያደረሱባቸው አመዝነው ታይተዋል። ብዙ ቅርሶች ጥለዋል፤(36) ሰባብረዋል፤ መጽሐፍትንም ቀደደዋል፤ እልባሳትንም ሸረካክተዋል።

የሦስተኛው የዘረፋ ቡድን ከወሰደቸው መካከል ከወርቅ የተሠራ የእቡነ ሰላማ አክሊል ወይም ዘውድ ጫማና ቀበቶ፤ ከወርቅ የተሠራ ሁለት ጽዋዎች(37) ከወርቅ የተሠራ በእንገት ላይ የሚጠልቅ የእጹ

ቴዎድሮስ የሰሎሞን ኒሽን እንደዚሁም ንጉሠ ሲነገሠ ለብሰውት የነበረው የማዕረግ ልብስ ይገኙባቸዋል።

አራተኛው ቡድን ከዘረፋቸው መካከል የተለያዩ ጋሽዎች፣ ከነዚህም ውስጥ የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ ጋሽ ሳይሆን አይቀርም ተብሎ የሚገመተውና የፈታውራሪ ገብርዬ ጋሽ፣ ልዩ ልዩ ጦሮችና ጉራዴዎች፣ ያሸበረቁ የፈረስ ዕቃዎች፣ በተጨማሪም የቴዎድሮስ እስረኞች የታሰሩበት የእግር ብረት ይገኙበታል።

አምስተኛውና የመጨረሻው የዘረፋ ቡድን ያተኮረው እጼ ቴዎድሮስ በየአገሩ ሲዘዋወሩ ያርፉበት በነበረው ድንኳናቸው ይጠጡበት በነበረው ዋንጫቸው፣ የማንነቱ ባልታወቀ የፈረስ ልብስ ሳይ ነበረ። ወታደሮቹ በዚህ ሳይገቱ የደረሱበትን መንደር በማሰስና እያንዳንዱ ቤት ውስጥ በመግባት ተመሳሳይ ዘረፋ ከማካሄዳቸውም በሻገር ከተለያዩ ቤተክርስቲያኖች የተገኙትን መንፈሳዊ ሰዕሎችና እንደዚሁም ቁጥራቸው እሥር የሚደርሱ ታቦቶችን(38) ሳይቀሩ ወስደዋል። በአጠቃላይ ከንጉሠ ነገሥቱ ቤተመንግሥት ጀምሮ በአነስተኛ ገጆ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ታሪካዊና በሕሳዊ ቅርሶች ሳይቀሩ ተዘርፈዋል።

አብዛኛዎቹ በዘረፋ ሳይ ተሠማርተው የነበሩት ወታደሮች አስተሳሰብ ብዙ ገንዘብ ለማግኘት እንጂ ለዕቃዎቹ ታሪካዊና በሕሳዊ ቅርሶነት እንዳልሰጧቸው መገመት አያደግትም። ለምሳሌ፣ ሪቸርድ ሆምስ የብሪቲሽ ሙዚየም ኢክስፐርትና አርኬዎሎጂስት ከአንድ በዘረፋ ሳይ ተሰማርቶ ከነበረ ወታደር ከወርቅ የተሠራውን የእቡን ሰለማን የዘውድ አክሊልና የወርቅ ጽዋ(39) በሳዩ ሳይ በግዕዝ እንደሚከተለው የተጻፈበትን «ዝንቱ ጽዋዕ ከወሀብዋ ደግማዊ ኢያሱ ወብእሲቱ ወሰተ ጊዮርጊስ ለቅድስት ቀስቋም ከመ ትኩኖመ መድኃኒተ ሥጋ ወነፍስ» ወደ አማርኛ ሰተረጉም እንደሁም እጼ ኢያሱ ብርሃን ሰገድ ለቀሰቋም ቤተክርስቲያን ያበረከቷቸውን ሦስት ኪሎ የሚመዝኑ የቁርባን ጽዋዎች» መለት ሲሆን እነዚህንም በአራት የእንግሊዝ ፖውንድ(40) ብቻ እንደሸጠላቸው ይነገራል።

ጄኔራል ናፒየር የወታደሮቹን አስተሳሰብ መነሻ በማድረግ በመቅደሳና በአካባቢዋ የተዘረፉት የባሕልና የታሪክ ቅርሶቻችን በሙሉ በዉረታ እንዲሸጡ ወሰነ።(41)

ዉረታውን የተሳካ ለማድረግ ገላጣ በሆነችው ደላንታ ሚደ እንዲካሄድ ተወሰነ። ቅርሶቹን ከመቅደሳ ወደ ደላንታ ለማድረስ በአሥራ አምስት ዝሆኖችና ከሁለት መቶ በላይ በሚሆኑ አጋሰሶች ተጠቅመዋል።(42) ይህም የሚነግረን የቱን ያህል ብዛት ያላቸው ቅርሶች ተዘርፈው እንደነበረ ነው።

ደላንታ እንደደረሱም የተለያዩ ስጋጃዎች ሚደው ላይ እንዲነጠፉ ተደረገ። በስጋጃዎቹ ላይ ቅርሶቹ በያይነታቸው ተደርድረው ለዉረታ ተዘጋጁ። አጫራችም የሚሆን መኮንን ተመረጠ። ለሽያጭ ከቀረቡት ዕቃዎች መካከል የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ ፀጉር ይገኝበት ነበር።

ዉረታው ከተጀመረ እንስቶ እስካለቀበት ጊዜ ድረስ በማንም ሊሸነፉ ያልተቻሉት ቀደም ሲልም ገና ከሀገራቸው ሲንቀሳቀሱ ገንዘብ አስታቅፈዋቸው ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ተሸኝተው የነበሩት የብሪትሽ ሙዚየም ተወካይ ሚስተር ሪቻርድ ሆምስና እንዲሁም ከወታደሮቹ በኩል ኩሎኔል ፍሬዘር ይገኙበታል። ለምሳሌ፣ አጼ ቴዎድሮስ ገና ከልጅነታቸው ጀምሮ ይይዙት የነበረው በብርና በወርቅ ያሸበረቀ ጋሻ(43) የዉረታው መነሻ አስር ደላር ሆኖ እስከ ሁለት መቶ ደላር በመድረስ ኩሎኔል ፍሬዘር የዉረታው አሸናፊ በመሆን ሊገዛው ችሎአል።

ዉረታው ለሁለት ቀናት ያህል ከተካሄደ በኋላ ከሽያጭ የተሰበሰበውን አምስት ሺ ፖውንድ ወታደሮቹ እንዲከፋፈሉት ደተረገ።(44)

ምንም እንኳን ጄኔራል ናፒየር በዘዘው መሠረት በመቅደስ ተሰብስበው የነበሩት ሁሉ ቅርሶች ለዉረታ ቀርበው ነበር በማለት ለማስመሰል ተሞክሮ እንጂ እንደንድ በለሃብቶች በተለይም ሲቪሎችና እፈበሮች ራሱ ጄኔራል ናፒየር ሰይቀር ቀደም ብለው ዉረታው በደፊ ከመጀመሩ በፊት ለየራሳቸው ያከማቹአቸው ቅርሶች በብዛት እንደነበሩ ድርጊቱ ከለፈ በኋላ ሊታወቅ ተችሎአል። ለምሳሌ ለዉረታው

ከልቀረቡት ቅርሶች መካከል የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ ዘውዶች፤ የክብርና የግዕረግ ልብስቻቸው፤ በሺ የሚቶጠሩ የብራና መጽሐፍቶችና የቴዎድሮስ ግህተም፤ የአቡነ ሰለግ የወርቅ አክሊል፤ በብር ያሸበረቀ ጋሻ፤ በክብረበዓል ጊዜ ጥቅም ላይ የሚውል የቴዎድሮስ ከበርና የመሰብሰቡ ከሌሎች ንብረቶች ጋር ከመቅደሳ ቤተ ክርስቲያን አጥር ግቢ በነበሩት ጎጆዎች ውስጥ ታምቀው(45) እንደነበር ይነገራል።

እንደዚህም ጨረታው ላይ ቅርሶቻቸውን ከልቀረቡት መካከል ጩዋ መስለው የሚታዩ፤ በዕድሜ በበል ያሉና የተከበሩ፤ ቀደም ሲልም የአጼ ቴዎድሮስ እስረኞች በመሆን እስር ቤት የግቀቁ/ውን ጌል ሰባኪዎች የነበሩ እውሮፖውያን ገና ወታደሮቹ በቡድን እየሆኑ ለዘረፋ ከመሰማራታቸው በፊት ሰርቀው ያስቀመጡአቸው ቅርሶች ከእግሮቻቸው አጠገብ ተከምሮ ይታይ እንደነበር አስታንሊ(46) አብራርቶ ገልጾታል። በተለይም ከአቡኑ መቃብር ላይ ተፈጽሞ የነበረውን የሰርቶት ወንጀል አስመልክቶ ሲናገር «በጣም ከሚያስገርመውና ከሚያሳዝነው ነገር ሁሉ ከእስረኞቹ መካከል አንዱ ከሰድስት ወር በፊት ተቀብረው የነበሩት ከአቡነ ሰለግ መቃብር ድረስ በመሄድ መቃብሩን እውጥቶና ሰብር ብዙ ሺ ዶላር ሊያወጣ የሚችል ከአልግዝ የተሠራ መስቀለቸውን ከእንገታቸው ላይ መንጭቶ መውሰድ የቱን ያህል የተረገመ ሰይጣን እንደነበር ነው።» ሲል በዝርዝር አስቀምጦታል።(47)

ቀደም ሲል ለጨረታ ያልቀረቡ የቤተመንግሥት ንብረቶችና የጦር መሣሪያዎች ተቀምጠው ከነበሩበት ከመቀደሳ መድኃኔዓለም ቤተክርስቲያን አጥር ግቢ ከሚገኙት ጎጆዎች ውስጥ(48) የአጼ ቴዎድሮስን የግዕረግ ልብስና ዘውዶቻቸውን፤ መጽሐፍታቸውን፤ ጽዋቸውንና ከበርአቸውን እንደዚሁም ግሕተማቸውን ወደሀገሩ ለመውሰድ ለይቶ በማውጣት፤ የቀረውን ንብረት የወሎ በላባት ልጅ ለነበሩት ለወይዘሮ መስተዋትና ለወጣቱ ልጃቸው ለይማም ዓምዴ(49) ከእስረክበ በኋላ ሶስት ሺ ቤቶች የሰፈሩበትን የመቅደሳ መንደር እጼ ቴዎድሮስ የተቀበሩበት መድኃኔዓለም ቤተክርስቲያን ላይቀር በእሳት በማጋየት(50) መቅደሳን እንዳለነበረች አደረጋት።

ይህንን ጦርነት በማስተባበር የተሳካ ውጤት ላስገኙት የቴዎድሮስን ከበር ሦስት የተለያዩ ብርጌዶች ከሸለግቸው በኋላ፤ ሌሎቹን ቅርሶች እግበስብሰ ወደ አገሩ ተመለሰ።

ምንም እንኳ ጦርነቱ እንደበቃ የእንግሊዝ ወታደሮች ብዙ ሳይቶ ወደአገራቸው የተመለሱ ቢሆንም ለመንገዳቸው ከሚገለገሉባቸው ምግብና የቤት ቁሳቁሶች በሽገር እግረመንገዳቸውን፤ የሚያስረዳታቸውን ያህል ቅርሶችንን ከሀገር ለማስወጣት ሲሞክሩ በጉዞአቸው ሳይ ሳሉ እያሌ መከራናስቃይ ደርሶባቸው እንደነበር በታሪክ ተመዝግቦአል። ለምሳሌ፡- ጆኔራል ኖፒየር በሱ የሚመሩት የጦር መኮንኖች እ.ኤ.አ. ሚይ 29 ቀን 1868 ከኢትዮጵያ ክልል ጠቅልልው ለመውጣት ወደ ሰንዓፊ አካባቢ እስከተቃረቡ ድረስ ሽፍቶች አልፎ አልፎ አደጋ ይጥሉባቸው ነበር። በየጊዜያቱ የሚጥለውም ዝናብ ጉዞአቸው እንዲሰናከል አድርጎባቸዋል። በተለይም አንድ ቀን የጣልታይለኛ ዝናብ መንገዳቸውን ሊዘጋባቸው ከመቻሉም በላይ የግያቋርጥ ጎርፍ ስለነበር ብዙ እንሰሳትና የሰበት ሰዎች ሕይወት ሊያልፍ ችሎአል።(51)

ታሪኩ በዚህ ብቻ አላበቃም። የመቅደሳን ጦርነት እስከ መጨረሻው ድረስ ሲከታተል የነበረው ጋዜጠኛ በጉዞው ላይ አጋጥሞት የነበረው ስቃይ በቀላሉ የሚገመት አልነበረም። ይህ ግለሰብ በጨረቃ የሰበሰባቸውን ቅርሶች በአምስት አግሰስ ጭኖ(52) ከመቅደሳ ወደ ሰንዓፊ ከዚያም ወደ ዙላ በሚጓዝበት ወቅት እጅግ በጣም የግያቋርጥ ታይለኛ ዝናብ በመዝነቡ የተነሳ ከየተራሮቹ የሚወርደው ጎርፍ ወደ ጅረትነት፤ ከዚያም ወደ ወንዝነት እየተቀየረ በመምጣቱና የወንዙ መላት ጊዜ በማይሰጥ ሁኔታ እየጨመረ በመሄዱ ጋዜጠኛውና ጓደኞቹ ተስፋ ቅርጠው ካለቀላቸው በኋላ ድንገት የዝናቡ መጠን በመቀነሱ ሕይወታቸው ሊተርፍ ችሏል።(53)

ስለሆነም በዝናቡ ታይላ እየተሸገሸገ ወደ ወንዙ የገባው የአፈር ደለል ከፍታ፤ እስከ አንድ ሜትር በመድረሱ አጋሰሶቹ ከተጫኑት የቅርስ ሸክም ጋር ይህንን ደለል ለማቋረጥ በለመቻላቸው ጋዜጠኛውና ጓደኞቹ ያለውደታቸውና ያለፍላጎታቸው ክብደት ለመቀነስ ሲሉ ብቻ ከበድ ያሉትን ቅርሶች እያወጡ ጥለዋቸዋል። ከነዚህም መካከል በደላንታው ጨረታ ላይ በሃምሳ ሩፒ (የህንድ ገንዘብ) ገዝቶ ያኖረው ዘጠና ኪሎ ክብደት ይመዝን የነበረው የቲዎድሮስ ስጋጃ ይገኝበታል።(54)

በመጨረሻም ጋዜጠኛው ይህንን ሁሉ ፈተናና ስቃይ አልፋዙላ ከምትባለው የቀይ ባሕራችን ጠረፍ ደረሰ። ከዚያም በአምስት በቅሎዎች ላይ ጭነዋቸው ያመጧቸውን ቅርሶች በሰጥን አስገብቶ ካሸጋቸው በኋላ እንሰላቱን ሸጦአቸው በማግስቱ «ትራንስፖርት እስቲመር ኢንጂን» ተብላ በምትጠራው አነስተኛ መርከብ እሱና የአጼ ቴዎድሮስን አራት ዘውዶች(55) ለንግሥት ሺክቶሪያ እንዲያደርስ ከተወከለው ከኩሎኔል ሚልወርድ ጋር በመሆን በሰዊዝ ካናል በኩል አድርገው ጉዞአቸውን ወደ እንግሊዝ አገር አመሩ።

የአቡነ ሰላማን ከወርቅ የተሠራ አክሊልና የቁርባን ጽዋ ከአንድ ጦር ሚዳ ላይ ከዋለ ወታደር የብሪትሽ ሙዚየም ተወካይ ሆልምስ በአራት የእንግሊዝ ፖውንድ ብቻ ገዝቶት እንደነበር ቀደም ቢል ተጠቅሷል። ይህ በእንዲህ እንደሰ እንግሊዞች ድል አገኘን ብለው ወደ አገራቸው እንደተመለሱ የተጠቀሱትን ሁለት ቅርሶች ሪፖርቱ ሆልምስ ከኩሎኔል ፍሪዘር፤ ከኩሎኔል ሚልወርድና ከኩሎኔል ካሚሩን ጋር በመመሰጠር «ዘ አቢሲኒያን ፕራይስ ፈንድ ኮሚቴ» በሚል ስም ለብሪትሽ ሙዚየም በሁለት ሺ የእንግሊዝ ፖውንድ እንዲሸጥላቸው እ.አ.አ. ጁላይ 1/1868 አቅርበውት እንደነበር የደብዳቤ መረዳዎች ይጠቁማሉ።(56)

በሽያጭ ሆነ ወይም በስጦታ መተላለፋቸው ለጊዜው ባይታወቅም ባሁኑ ጊዜ ከመቅደላ የተወሰዱት ቅርሶች በእንግሊዝ አገር ሙዚየሞች ውስጥ በአመጡአቸው ሰዎች ስም ተመዝግበው ይገኛሉ። ለምሳሌ ፍራንሲስክ አልቫራዝ በጻፈው «ዘ ፕራስተር ጀን» ተብሎ በሚጠራው መጽሐፍ መጨረሻ ላይ ተርጓሚዎቹና አዘጋጅዎቹ ሀንቲንግፎርድና ቤክንግሃም እንደጠቀሱት በብሪትሽ ሙዚየም ውስጥ «ሆልምስ ኩሊክሽን» እየተባሉ የሚጠሩ አሥር ታቦቶች ከመኖራቸውም በላይ ብዛታቸው ከአንድ ሺ በላይ የሚደርስ የኢትዮጵያ የእጅ ጽሑፍ መጽሐፎች በተጠቀሰው ሙዚየም ውስጥ ተደርድረው ለሕዝብ ይታያሉ።(57)

ባጠቃላይ፤ የሀገሪቷ ሀብቶች በተለያዩ ሥፍራዎችና ሙዚየሞች ውስጥ በገለሰባችም እጅ ጭምር የሚገኙ መሆናቸው መታወቅ አለበት። ይህ ሁኔታ የተጠቃለለ ኢንቨንተሪ ለመስራት አስቸጋሪ ያደርገዋል። ቢሆንም ጥረቱ መቀጠል አለበት።

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45. Markham, p. 358; ተከለላደት ሙከረያ ላይ ቴዎድሮስና የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራት
(አዲስ አበባ፤ 1982) ገጽ 446.
46. Myatt, p. 165; Stanley, p. 456.
47. Myatt, p. 165; Stanley, p. 457.
48. ተከለላደት ሙከረያ ላይ ቴዎድሮስና የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራት (አዲስ አበባ፤ 1982)
ገጽ 446.

49. Shepherd, p. 269; ተከላኪዎች መከራያ አፄ ቴዎድሮስና የኢትዮጵያ አገዳኝነት (አዲስ አበባ፤ 1982) ገጽ 446.

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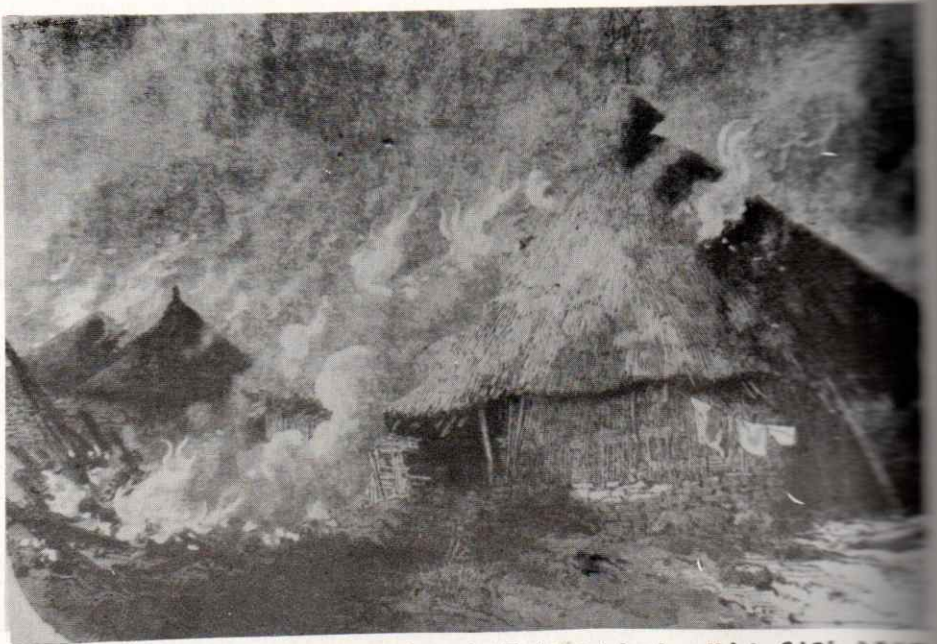
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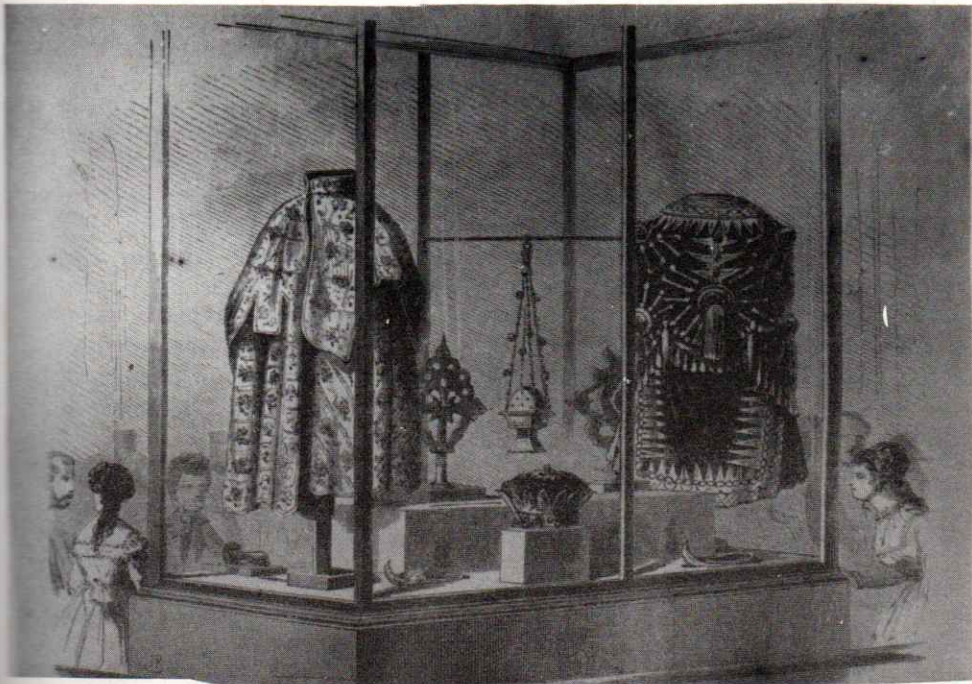
እዚ ቴዎድሮስ የተቀበሩበት የመቅደሳው መድሐኒዓለም ቤተ ክርስቲያን በጊዜው የተነሣ ፎተግራፍ



የመድሐኒዓለም ቤተ ክርስቲያን በእንግሊዞች እንደተቃጠለ። ሄነሪ ብላንክ በጊዜው መጽሐፍ የተወሰደ



እንግሊዞች ዘርፈው የወሰዱት ታቦት። ከራሳም መጽሐፍ የተወሰደ



ከመቅደሳ የተዘረፉ የቤተመንግሥት እና የቤተክርስቲያን አልባሳትና ዕቃዎች ለንደን ከተወሰዱ በኋላ በኢግዚዝቭን ቢታዩ። ለሞንድ ኢሉስትሬት የተሰኘ ጋዜጣ ላይ የወጣ።

Rita Pankhurst

It is a fact confirmed by many observers that Ethiopians of all walks of life show a passionate interest in their history. They will discuss such towering figures as Asé Téwodros (1855-1868) in every-day conversation, unlike, for example, ordinary British citizens who tend to remain supremely indifferent to such figures as his contemporary, Queen Victoria, (1837-1901) although she reigned for five times as long as he did.

The memory of Atse Téwodros is very much alive in Ethiopia today; he is admired mainly for his aim to modernize and unify the country, his bravery in battle, and his stand against the superior weaponry of the British Expeditionary force. The confrontation ended when he chose suicide rather than surrender, one hundred and twenty years ago, on 13 April 1868, which was Easter Monday for the British Christian troops and for the Ethiopians.

There is, however, another noble aim, partially achieved, for which Téwodros is less well remembered. He had intended to build on Christian ground near the natural fortress of Mäqdäla, a great church which was to be like other important churches in Ethiopia, a centre of learning as well as of prayer. It was to be dedicated, like other churches where he particularly liked to worship, and like the modest church within the fortress, to Mädhané Aläm, Saviour of the World.

For years Téwodros had been collecting traditional service books and other manuscripts from churches throughout his domains, especially from Gondär, whose priests had displeased him. The Emperor's chronicle written by Aläqa Wäldä Maryam, records that 981 manuscripts and other treasures were removed from that city to Däbrä Tabor, which the Emperor wished to make into 'a new Gondär'. The chronicle relates that these were later taken to Mäqdäla, which had been proclaimed the seat of the royal treasury. Had Téwodros not removed the manuscripts from Gondär they might well have perished when the Dervishes sacked the city in 1888.

It is not known how exactly the books were kept, but the English surgeon, Henry Blanc, one of Téwodros's prisoners at Mäqdäla, reports that manuscripts and paper were collected in a separate building from muskets, pistols etc. The manuscripts must have been carefully supervised for Blanc records that "once or twice a week the chiefs would meet in consultation in a small house erected for that purpose in the magazine enclosure.. to assure themselves by personal inspection that the 'treasures' entrusted to their care were in perfect order and in safe keeping."¹

Evidence that Téwodros had amassed at Mäqdäla a very large number of manuscripts, the raw material for a great library, comes from several witnesses who entered the treasury enclosure after the British troops stormed the fortress. The geographer C.R. Markham, for example, mentions among the treasures he saw 'tons of Ge'ez and Amharic manuscript books'.²

The capture of Mäqdäla was followed by an evening of looting 'in the best tradition of the British army at the time', as the military historian, F. Myatt had observed³, and the treasury was soon plundered. Several observers described how soldiers and civilians, including Téwodros's newly freed captives, helped themselves to whatever they fancied.

It was also a tradition of the British army to recuperate booty not captured at the point of sword or bayonet, and to sell it soon after a battle, dividing the proceedings among all the troops who took part. After the capture of Mäqdäla it was decided to form a prize committee to collect the plunder for valuing, auction, and distribution of the prize money. Despite the fact that the only practicable way out of the citadel, through the northern gate, was well guarded, not all booty reached the official collectors.

It is clear that many manuscripts must have been torn apart or destroyed. H.M. Stanley, special correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who was on the mountain shortly after the capture, reports that there were "heaps of parchment royally illuminated; stacks of Amharic bibles; missals and numberless albums;... Over a space growing more and more extended, the thousand articles were scattered in infinite bewilderment and confusion until they dotted the whole surface of the rocky citadel, the slopes of the hill, and the entire road camp two miles off!"⁴ Dr. Rohlf, a German representative on the expedition, noted that, during the withdrawal of the troops the surroundings of Mäqdäla were strewn with torn Amharic books, loose leaves and fragments, and that much must have been destroyed at that time.⁵

Other smaller manuscripts and more probably scrolls, could also have escaped the attention of the sentinels, and there is evidence in a letter written a few years later by a member of the Prize Committee Lieutenant-Colonel T.W. Milward, that some civilians attached to the army did not comply with the order to hand over what they had looted.⁶

On 17 April, after Mäqdäla had been cleared of its population, and the guns had been destroyed, the British sappers set fire to all the buildings so that no trace was left of the edifices which once housed the manuscripts.

Some 200 mules and 15 elephants were needed to carry the loot down to the Dalanta plain, on the northern side of the Bašilo river, where the auction began in the afternoon of 20 April, ending the next day.

Some souvenir items fetched high prices, especially if they were connected personally with Téwodros, but the manuscripts found fewer bidders because their real value was not known. Nevertheless among the 248 British officers, the foreign officers and the accompanying civilians there were some who bid against Richard Holmes, the representative of the British Museum.

Holmes, an assistant in the Museum's Department of Manuscripts, was given the title of archaeologist to the expedition and entrusted with £1,000 to cover the cost of excavations or collections. As the expedition had by-passed Aksum and he had not found antiquities *en route* he was still in possession of a significant sum at the time of the auction. He had had the opportunity to see the manuscripts beforehand. According to his own account, fearing that the treasures of Mäqdäla would disappear, he had rushed up the fortress minutes after the soldiers had broken through. As we now know, he had himself participated in the looting.⁷ He may also have had further access to the manuscripts in the two days preceding the auction when the sale was being prepared, and he benefitted from the advice of Werner Munzinger, a Swiss national who had been appointed British Consul at Massawa and was an accomplished scholar.

Thus prepared Holmes was in a good position to select and purchase the best among the Mäqdäla manuscripts. The official record of the expedition, written by two officers, T.T. Holland and H.M. Hozier mentions neither the loot nor the sale of the manuscripts but blandly states that '359 books were retained for the purpose of scientific examination in the hope that some light might be thrown by them, through the labours of the learned men of Europe, on the ancient history of Ethiopia and on the records of Christianity'.⁸ Three of the manuscripts were acquired by Holmes on the way to Mäqdäla, and six magnificent volumes, out of sixteen presented to Queen Victoria were retained at her Windsor Castle Library, so that the Museum acquired a total of 350 manuscripts through Holmes' purchases at the auction of the loot.

Manuscripts purchased by rival bidders, as well as some which might have been smuggled out, also reached libraries, principally in Britain, by purchase or donation. Some manuscripts are clearly identifiable as having come from Mäqdäla; others provided circumstantial evidence. In addition to the 350 mentioned above, the following minimum number of manuscripts, very probably from Mäqdäla, are in public domain in Britain:

- 12 Cambridge University Library
- 10 Bodleian Library, Oxford University
- 5 British Library, formerly British Museum, acquired since the deposit of the Mäqdäla collection in 1878
- 3 John Rydlands Library, University of Manchester
- 2 National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh

It is possible that some Ethiopian manuscripts from Mäqdäla may also be found in other libraries and museums, and there are evidently some still held privately. From time to time a Mäqdäla manuscript appears in an auction room, mainly in Britain, as families dispose of unwanted heirlooms.

Of the eight known privately acquired manuscripts from Mäqdäla the most significant were probably five acquired by Lady Meux, a wealthy English collector of antiquities, who purchased them on the advice of the British orientalist Wallis Budge. He described them as follows:

"The oldest was a small volume containing a Life of Hannâ, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary; it was illustrated with archaic Ethiopian pictures of Hannâ and her husband Joachim, the Birth of the Virgin & c., and was written in the XVth century. It was and still is the only copy of the Life of Hannâ in Ethiopic known to me. Two of the manuscripts were large handsome volumes of about 16 inches square, and each containing a good selection of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary, illustrated with many full-page pictures painted in bright colours which were intended to illustrate the texts of the Miracles. The older of these MSS was written in the XVIth century and the other a century later; each has been made for the use of a royal personage. Another manuscript contained the Life of Mabâ'â Seyon, a comparatively modern Ethiopian saint, and the Life of Gabra Krestôs, a prince who abandoned his royal state and home and parents, and became a mendicant monk. These Lives were illustrated by a large series of coloured pictures, which are of special interest as they portray events in the daily life of the modern Abyssinians."

Lady Meux had these manuscripts printed for private circulation in 1898 and 1900 and sent Emperor Menelik II a copy of the lavishly illustrated volume containing four of the manuscripts. Menelik replied: '...the book which you sent me... has come to me. I am pleased. And because it is very well done I send you this letter and my seal'.¹⁰

The publication of these manuscripts seems to have been much appreciated in Ethiopia, and in 1902, when Ras Makonnen went to England for the coronation of King Edward VII he visited Lady Meux. Together with three Ethiopian bishops he examined both the original manuscripts and the reproductions. Budge relates that 'His reverence for the manuscripts was great, and after bowing several times to the older manuscript of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary, he knelt on the floor of the Museum [at her estate in Theobalds Park, Chestnut] and lifting the book on the top of his head remained in this attitude and prayed for several minutes. A few days later Lady Meux sent to him by me a set of her publications, and when

I delivered these books at his lodging in Westminster the joy of himself and the bishops who were with him was unbounded'.¹¹

Lady Meux bequeathed the manuscripts to Menelik in her will, but after her death in 1910 there was some public concern that the manuscripts would leave Britain, and, it having been assumed that Menelik had died in 1911, (when in fact he had only suffered a stroke) the manuscripts were sold; no attempts seem to have been made to verify whether Menelik had indeed died and, if so, who was his heir. One of the manuscripts, the XVIIIth century collection of miracles of the Virgin Mary, was purchased for the Library of Chester Beatty in Dublin, but the whereabouts of the other four manuscripts is not known.

About ten manuscripts obtained during the expedition found their way into libraries outside Great Britain: in Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Vatican, India and the U.S.A.

Not all the manuscripts looted by the British troops left the country with the expedition. A considerable number of those offered for sale at the auction did not obtain any bidders, so that the expedition found itself saddled with a large quantity of unsold manuscripts of apparently lesser interest. Transporting these to the Coast and hence to England presented the leader of the expedition, General Napier, with a logistic problem which he solved by disposing of them in Ethiopia.

A month after the auction at Dalanta at which, according to Stanley, the total receipts amounted to £5,000, each soldier receiving some four dollars,¹² Napier reported that 'no booty' was found at Mäqdäla.¹³ Holland and Hozier's official history, when referring to the manuscripts, presents a version which is at best only a part of the truth, since it omits all mention of the 400 or so books disposed of at the auction. 'On the capture of Magdala' they write, 'a large number of manuscripts were found... On finding that the manuscripts would have to be abandoned to the Gallas it became necessary to provide for the safety of these volumes which would otherwise have been destroyed by the Mohammedans. About 900 volumes were taken as far as Chelikut and there about 600 were delivered to the priests of the Church, one of the most important in Abyssinia'.¹⁴ Had the expedition's concern been for the preservation in Ethiopia of the Christian cultural objects from Mäqdäla, Čäläqot and other churches would have been the beneficiaries not only of the unwanted manuscripts, but also of the finer ones (as well as other church objects) which were taken to Britain.

When the present writer visited Čäläqot in 1970 she was shown 47 manuscripts, apparently the total number remaining there. Three had probably, and one had certainly come from Mäqdäla. One explanation why so few manuscripts from Mäqdäla could be traced may be that Emperor Yohannes is said to have had many transferred to seven new churches he founded in and around

Mäqalé.¹⁵ It is not known whether these, or other churches on the expedition's route to the coast, have any volumes from Mäqdäla.

What kind of manuscripts did Téwodros assemble for the intended new church of Mädhané Aläm? We can draw some conclusions from the manuscripts from Mäqdäla deposited at the British Museum, which as we have seen, were considered the most interesting. As by tradition most manuscripts were written for religious purposes and the Emperor had collected them to endow a church, it is not surprising that the vast majority are of a religious nature. Holy Scriptures, lectionaries and prayer books, collection of homilies, Miracles of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus, works by the Fathers of the Church, Acts of the Apostles and many Lives of Saints, some of them Ethiopian. Also represented, however, was the *Fetäḥ Nägäst*, or Laws of the Kings, and several works of history including two Ethiopian chronicles and a *Kebrä Nägäst*, or Glory of Kings. Three manuscripts were concerned with traditional medicine.

With regard to their antiquity, although most of the manuscripts date from relatively recent times, mainly from the previous three hundred years, a few volumes of particular interest can be dated to the sixteenth century. Many of the British Museum manuscripts are beautifully bound and illustrated, throwing light not only on traditional Ethiopian art, but also, like the lives of local saints, on the way of life of Ethiopians of bygone days. Further important information has emerged, and is still emerging from annotations in the margins of the manuscripts and other material later added to the texts.

The interest of the collection is, however, much greater than the sum of its parts, for it gives an idea of the world of learning available to educated Ethiopians during the reign of Téwodros. The full extent of the library he had amassed will never be known. Some 390 to 400 volumes have come to light outside Ethiopia, and about 900 were left in Ethiopia by the expedition. Some of these may have belonged to the Mädhané Aläm collections, but on the other hand, witnesses have testified to the manuscripts strewn over the hillsides on and near the fortress after the battle. Taking these and other factors into consideration it may be permissible to estimate conservatively that the library probably had some 1300 volumes.

Very little of the Mäqdäla collection is available to scholars in Ethiopia today. Only three volumes have been returned to the country: the first, and most renowned, was a manuscript containing a copy of the *Kebrä Nägäst* (British Museum, Orient. 819) which, in 1872, Emperor Yohannes IV (1868-1889) requested Queen Victoria to return. At her request the Trustees of the British Museum agreed to hand it over - one of the very rare occasions when the Museum parted with an item it had acquired.

The volume passed into the possession of Emperor Menelik II (1865-1913) and was deposited in the Church of Ragu'él at Entotto. Subsequently, in

September 1955, the manuscript was moved, together with the *tabot* and various church paraphernalia, to the new church of Ragu'él in the market area of Addis Ababa where the present writer inspected it in 1971. In addition to the *Kebrä Nägäst* the volume contains orders concerning the administration of the church of Aksum, a diagrammatic map of Ethiopia, donations by various sovereigns, details of taxes paid to them, a king list and titles of governors, all of which might account for the interest it held for Emperor Yohannes. The book is unique in that it bears certain ownership marks: an inscription indicating that it had belonged to the Church of Mädhane Alām (at Mäqdāla), the stamp of the British Museum, and one of the seals of Emperor Menelik. This manuscript has been filmed by the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library so that its text can now be viewed both at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and at the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture.

A second manuscript, described as King Theodore's Bible, was returned to Ethiopia in 1942, and a prayer scroll came back from Australia in 1968.

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies, with Swedish assistance, has set in motion a project to microfilm the entire Mäqdāla collection. When this work will have been completed, an important part of the library of Tēwodros will have come home even though, regrettably, it will be only accessible through a microfilm reader. Tēwodros's efforts to develop a centre of learning will thus not have been in vain.

NOTES

1. H. Blanc, *A narrative of captivity in Abyssinia*, London, 1868, pp.209-10.
2. C. Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition*, London, 1869, pp.357-8.
3. F. Myatt, *The March to Magdala*, London, 1970, p.165.
4. H.M. Stanley, *Coomassie and Magdala*, London, 1874, pp.457-9.
5. G. Rohlfs, *Meine Mission nach Abessinien*, Leipzig, 1883, p.257.
6. Milward to Lord Enfield, 27 November 1872, Foreign Office 1/29.
7. It transpired many years later that it was Holmes who had secretly appropriated the *Kwer'ata Re'esu*, the famous icon which had accompanied many an Ethiopian army to battle. See Richard Pankhurst, 'The Kwer'ata Re'esu: the history of an Ethiopian icon', *Abba Salama*, 1979, X, pp.169-87.
8. T.J. Holland and M.H. Hozier, *Record of the Expedition to Abyssinia*, London, 1870, II, pp.396-7.
9. E.A.W. Budge *Legends of our Lady Mary the Perpetual Virgin and her mother Hanna*, London, 1933, pp.vii-viii.

10. Budge, *Legends*, p.xiv.
11. Budge, *Legends*, pp.xiv-xv.
12. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p.471.
13. Telegram from Sir Robert Napier to Sir Stafford Northcote from Antalo, 13 May 1868, quoted in *Illustrated London News*.
14. Holland and Hozier *op. cit.*, II, p.396.
15. Rita Pankhurst, "The Library of Emperor Téwodros II at Mäqdäla (Magdala)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 1973, XXXVI, Part 1, p.23.
16. For example, Richard Pankhurst, with Germa Sellassie Asfaw, *Tax records and inventories of Emperor Téwodros of Ethiopia (1855-1868)*, London, 1978. Haddis Gabremeskel is currently working in London on a full survey of all marginal notes found in the Magdala manuscripts.

Cultural Treasure Looted From Mäqdäla
A Summary of Correspondence in British
National Newspapers since 1981

Stephen Bell

Over the last decade, considerable public attention has been directed towards the possession by museums and other academic institutions in the West (and to a lesser extent, in private collections) of cultural treasure removed from other countries or societies under circumstances of dubious legality - usually as a result of military and colonial campaigns in Africa and Asia in the 19th century. The impetus for the public debate on the moral question of whether or not certain *objects d'art* thus acquired should be restored to their countries of origin came in 1978, when an inter-governmental committee was formed under UNESCO seeking, in the words of its official title, "The return of cultural property to its country of origin or its restitution in case of illicit appropriation".

The case of the Elgin (or Parthenon) Marbles in the British Museum, removed from Greece in the early 19th century, is the undoubted *cause célèbre* of the entire question of cultural restitution. Meanwhile Ethiopia's own plight has, on a smaller scale, become a concurrent focus of attention, and has turned, inevitably, on the acquisition by British institutions, most notably the British Museum and Library, of Ethiopic manuscripts and other priceless objects in 1868, shortly after the conclusion of General Napier's campaign to Mäqdäla (Magdala)¹

This paper attempts briefly to summarize the recent debate conducted through correspondence columns of the British national press, specifically in so far as it is relevant to the loot from Mäqdäla that remains in Britain to this day.

An article by John Cunningham under the title "The man who takes care of everybody else's marbles", in the *Guardian* of 18 July 1981, profiled Dr. David Wilson, Director of the British Museum. The director's antipathy towards the argument for the return of the objects "removed in colonial times" was tempered by a declaration that it might be possible not to rule out the *loan* to some countries of some of the important objects from their past. In pointing out that the size of the holdings in the British Museum of a particular country was not necessarily a reflection of its colonial relationship with Britain, the Director made specific reference to Ethiopia: "Our Abyssinian holdings are more important than our Indian collection".

The article resulted in three letters published shortly afterwards in the *Guardian*. The first, by Dr. Richard Pankhurst and Rita Pankhurst on 20 July,

pointed out that the "Abyssinian holdings" which the Museum's Director considered "more important" than the Indian, had been acquired by plunder:

"Troops of the Napier expedition of 1867-68... looted the mountain fortress after the monarch's suicide, and made off with the Emperor's crown and other treasures, including over a thousand manuscripts. Of these 356 were purchased for the Museum by Richard Holmes, assistant in its department of manuscripts, who had been appointed the B.M.'s representative with the expedition.

Four years later Theodore's successor, Emperor Yohannes, anticipating UNESCO by over a century, asked the British Government for the return of one of the manuscripts.

The Museum's trustees, at the request of the Government, complied. He also appealed for the return of a painting of Christ which the Ethiopian army had traditionally taken to battle. A search for the icon proved fruitless. Queen Victoria wrote back, 'Of the picture we can discover no trace whatsoever.' Small wonder, for Holmes, soon to become librarian of Windsor Castle, did not think it fit to disclose (until after the death of Yohannes, and then discreetly) that he had acquired it himself".

The second letter, by the present author on 29 July, drew attention to the special importance of Theodore's library. As Ethiopia's first modernizing monarch, he had been attempting to build up a comprehensive library for the nation, and included in the material now in Britain were the only known records of Ethiopian taxation before the present century.² The letter further asked if any of those Ethiopian manuscripts which were duplicated in the Museum's collection, sometimes many times over, could be restored to Ethiopia. The third letter, from Dr. David Hamilton, was published on 1 August:

"Amongst other arguments that might well be mustered (against the proposal that the Museum yield to UNESCO demands) are that many of the more delicate items would not have survived, and so not be available for anyone to see anywhere, had Napier's men left them where they were.

Although containing some truth, such an argument inevitably carries little weight in Addis Ababa where Ethiopia's scholars and students are galled to find so many of their country's crucial source documents are overseas"

As a compromise, Dr. Hamilton proposed that Museums with important Ethiopian manuscripts and other documents send microfilm copies to the University of Addis Ababa while the argument over the ownership was decided in due course:

"Although I have no doubt that at a time of such financial stringency this proposal will not be welcomed by the various libraries concerned, the cost involved (for which, surely, international goodwill/research funds might be found) must be seen as a petty modest 'rent' for such important and valuable documents".

A chance to reopen the debate within the correspondence columns of another national newspaper presented itself three months later, when an article by Richard Dowden, "Should we give back these treasures?", appeared in the *Times* of 19 October 1981. This referred not to the Ethiopian case, but to Nigerian and Sri Lankan attempts to recover art treasures held in Britain, and the article summarized the legal and technical problems cited by museums and other bodies as arguments against restitution: "it would take an Act of Parliament to alter the British Museum Trust and force it to part with any of its items". Further, the British Museum's spokeswoman, Miss Jean Rankine, asserted that nothing in the British Museum's collection had been obtained illegally, a point challenged by Dr. Richard Pankhurst in a letter published two days later, on 21 October:

"Though this may be technically correct, there is no gainsaying that in the case of the Maqdala collection at least the museum representative, Richard Holmes, purchased articles which he knew to have been looted... The objects thus acquired included 350 Ethiopian manuscripts which, as a result of the museum's recent reorganization, now form part of the British Library. Your article asserts that 'it would take an Act of Parliament' to force the museum 'to part with any of its items': it is interesting to note that when Theodore's successor, Emperor Yohannes IV, wrote to Queen Victoria to request the return of one of the looted manuscripts the Foreign Secretary gave the appeal his blessing, and the museum trustees expressed 'great pleasure' in acceding to it".

Dr. Pankhurst's letter was the first of eleven published in response to Richard Dowden's articles, of which seven, either directly or obliquely, referred to the Ethiopian collections of museums in Britain. On 23 October, Professor Edward Ullendorff replied to Dr. Pankhurst:

"My friend Dr. Richard Pankhurst, in worrying about the Magdala 'loot' in the British Museum/Library, is surely writing with tongue in cheek. There are few scholars who have used the 350 Ethiopian manuscripts in the British Library as judiciously and assiduously as Dr. Pankhurst. Only very recently he published an important book which exploits to the fullest extent many of the marginalia in those manuscripts.

Neither Dr. Pankhurst nor the Ethiopian and western scholars who have worked on this collection (and indeed on others in Europe) could have contributed so significantly to the elucidation of Ethiopian history without the rich resources available in this country. Had they remained *in situ*, none of this would have been possible."

On 24 October Dr. David Hamilton reiterated his suggestion for the microfilming of "these and other similar documents so that their texts can be quickly and inexpensively returned on microfilm for study in the home context by students and scholars of the country concerned". This theme was further developed by Mr. B.H. Raven-Roberts, writing as chairman of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society, on 28 October:

"Your readers may be interested to know that the Anglo-Ethiopian Society has recently approached a number of libraries in this country holding substantial numbers of Ethiopian documents and manuscripts acquired in various ways over the years. The Society wished to know whether the libraries would consider donating microfilm copies of their holdings to the University Library in Addis Ababa, thus furthering the cause of Ethiopian scholarship in that country and also tempering the recent criticism made by UNESCO.

All expressed interest in, and some sympathy for, the idea that the university library of the country from which such material had originally been obtained should seek to enlarge its own holdings. They were all, not surprisingly, concerned at the cost of such an exercise, and felt that it would be beyond their means in present circumstances.

The Anglo-Ethiopian Society is now attempting to discover what such costs would be before attempting to consider ways in which the funds could be raised. Through the kind cooperation of the Librarian at Windsor Castle, arrangements have already been concluded to secure microfilm of its holdings. The Society hopes that other establishments will prove equally co-operative and follow that lead".³

A letter from the present author, published on 4 November, recounted the unsuccessful attempt by Emperor Yohannes IV to recover the painting of Christ (*Kwera'ta Re'esu*) from Britain in 1872, and concluded with the hope that "it could be returned to Ethiopia, the land to which it properly belongs".

The *Times* correspondence concluded with a contribution from Dr. Isaac Gottlieb, on 5 November:

"At the time the precious items were removed to the West, little facilities were available for their proper care in the country of their origin, nor was the microfilm technique so well developed. There is no excuse whatsoever at present for not returning the heritage to the country of its origin, irrespective of whether the art treasures were 'looted', 'bought' or were a 'gift'.

There is another aspect on which I wish to comment upon. During the past ten years I have visited Ethiopia three times, tape-recording the liturgical chants of a two-millennia-old sect living in the Gondar region, namely the Falashas, Pentateuchal-practising Jews, whose numbers have dwindled from 250,000 to 10,000 in 150 years.

In my view, one of the contributing factors to their near-disappearance was that many of their sacred manuscripts were removed by visitors and research workers. This left a spiritual vacuum, which made it easy for over-zealous Christian missionaries to entice them from their ancestral theological beliefs and practices".

Four years were to elapse before the Magdala loot re-emerged as a subject of correspondence in a national newspaper. On 29 October 1985 the *Guardian* printed an article, "Make a gift to Greece", by Christopher Price, a former Chairman of the House of Commons Select Commission on Education, Science and the Arts. It appeared shortly before an answer was due from the British Government to an official Greek request, through the machinery of UNESCO's inter-governmental committee for the return of the Parthenon marbles. The writer presented a strong case for compliance with the Greek request, which in the event (and to the surprise of few), was to be met with refusal. An earlier bilateral approach from the Greek Government in 1983, had also met with refusal "on the legalistic grounds that Lord Elgin had obtained the sculptures with the consent of the legitimate authorities of the day, and in any case the British Museum is not empowered to give away what it holds in trust for the nation".

The present author commended on this last point in a letter to the *Guardian*, published on 2 November:

"I cite the case of a priceless copy of the *Kebra Nagast*. In 1872 the museum returned to Ethiopia an illuminated bound manuscript which relates the story of the 2,000 years old Solomonic dynasty of which Haile Selassie was the last incumbent, and which had come into the museum's possession as a result of the military expedition to Magdala four years before. The trustees of the museum returned the *Kebra Nagast* in compliance with a request from Queen Victoria to Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia."

"Could this instance of cultural restitution provide a legal precedent?"

This was the only letter with an Ethiopian angle to be published in the *Guardian* in the wake of Christopher Price's article. One immediate result of its publication was a direct approach by letter, dated 4 November, to the present author from the British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, with which body the author remains in contact to this day:

"The point you make, and the example you cite, are extremely pertinent because it seems that the British Government has based its refusal to return the Marbles to where they belong on the sole argument of creating a precedent".

The parthenon marbles, and their implications for cultural restitution on a wider scale were to endure as a prominent issue of the day. The weekly *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) produced a special edition on cultural property on 25 July 1986, with lengthy contributions from Professor Robert Browning ("The plundering of nationhood") and Michael Dummett ("The ethics of cultural property"). These two articles in particular, which argued strongly for restitution, generated much debate in the correspondence columns of subsequent issues of the TLS (much of which was conducted in the specific context of Ethiopia). Professor Browning referred to the concept of "cultural property" as defined by Salah Stetie, the Lebanese writer and former chairman of UNESCO's inter-governmental committee: objects "so heavily charged with cultural or national significance that their removal from their culture of origin left that culture shorn of one of its dimensions and diminished in the eyes of its own creators"; and Browning alluded, among other instances, to the case of Ethiopia as a recognition of that concept that had been applied in the past:

"...many objects have been returned by museums to their country of origin. In 1872 the British Museum, at the request of Queen Victoria, returned to Ethiopia the oldest manuscript of the *Glory of Kings*, the chronicle of the history of the country, which had been taken from Magdala in 1868 by General Napier. Other items from the spoils of Magdala were returned by subsequent British sovereigns, the imperial crown of Emperor Theodore by George V in 1924 and the crown of the Abuna, the head of the Ethiopian Church, by Elizabeth II in 1965"

In response Richard Pankhurst wrote to the journal, on 15 August:

"An interesting precedent for the restitution of looted cultural property, so admirably documented by Robert Browning, is afforded by the United Nations' Peace Treaty with Italy. Signed in 1947, it states, in Article 37, that Italy should restore all works of art, religious objects, archives and objects of historical value belonging to Ethiopia or its nationals removed from Ethiopia to Italy since 3rd October 1935, that is, the date of Mussolini's invasion.

Though a manuscript and two crowns looted from Ethiopia over half a century earlier by the British expedition of 1867-8 against Emperor Theodore were subsequently returned, as Professor Browning rightly notes, the greater part of the booty remains in this country. It includes part of Téwodros's hair and the amulet he wore at the time of his suicide, as well as several remarkable processional crosses and some five hundred fine manuscripts, a number of them beautifully illustrated.

Professor Ullendorff was prompted by Dr. Pankhurst's letter to write at length, on 22 August. Only a portion of his letter is reproduced here:

"Dr. Richard Pankhurst is uncharacteristically unfair in his comparison of the brutal fascist invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-36 with the British expedition of 1867-68. The former was an unprovoked attack, followed by a permanent colonial occupation (brought to an end, incidentally by British and Ethiopian forces in 1941), while the latter was a mission to rescue unjustly imprisoned British and other nationals, followed by immediate withdrawal from the country...

I offer no comment on the general question as to whether and in what circumstances treasures of this nature should be restored to their original habitat. No doubt there are good reasons for doing so in some or many

cases. I feel, however, quite sure that Richard Pankhurst will, on reflection, agree that any comparison of the Napier expedition with Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia is unjust and unfortunate. Nor is it fair to use the term 'looted' in this particular case: the political, ethical and emotional climate of the 1980's cannot be likened to that of the 1860's.

Professor Browning's reference to the Ethiopian objects seem to me eminently reasonable. Perhaps I may be allowed to add a tailpiece to his statement that, at Queen Victoria's request, the British museum returned to Ethiopia the *Glory of the Kings* which the Magdala campaign had brought to Britain. Emperor Yohannes had written to Queen Victoria and to Earl Granville, the Foreign Secretary, requesting the return of the MS. His letter in the English translation, was said to include the phrase 'for in my country my people will not obey my orders without it'. The Amharic original shows, however, that there is no phrase in the text which corresponds to that translation. It must remain a matter of speculation whether the Queen would have urged the Trustees of the British Museum to comply with the Emperor's request, had it been known that the English translation did not reflect the text of the Imperial missive."

Dr. Pankhurst's reply to Professor Ullendorff was published on 5 September:

"I fear Edward Ullendorff reads too much into my reference to the 1946 Peace Treaty with Italy. I cited this 'as an interesting precedent for the restitution of looted cultural property' - the subject of Robert Browning's wide-ranging survey of the history of loot (25th July). I did not at any point compare or intend to compare British military intervention in 1867-68 with the Italian Fascist invasion of 1935-36.

The letter of 1872 from Emperor Yohannes IV requesting the return of the *Glory of Kings*, to which Professor Ullendorff refers, raises interesting question. The Amharic text, as Ullendorff was the first to note (*Bulletin of SOAS*, 1969, 32), did not make use of the phrase found in the English translation prepared by the Emperor's envoy, 'General' Kirkham: 'My people will not obey my orders without it'. The question still remains: why was Yohannes so interested in this particular manuscript?

Having examined the volume in Addis Ababa, and more recently studied a microfilm of it, my personal view is that his interest lay not simply in the *Glory of Kings*, but also in other material contained in the manuscript such as title-deeds, lists of property, tax data etc. later referred to by Conti Rossini as '*the Liber Axumae*'. The manuscript, if this was the case, would have been valued on account of its administrative and economic records

as much as for its symbolic role as a legendary 'charter' linking the Ethiopian dynasty to the biblical King Solomon. The work also includes a rare Ethiopian 'map' showing Axum surrounded by several provinces - the subject of a paper presented at the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa in 1984.⁴

Without wishing to sound pedantic, the distinction between purchase and loot is, I feel, a significant one. Professor Ullendorff is, of course, quite correct in saying that the manuscripts from Magdala were purchased. However, the purchasers, in true military tradition, were knowingly acquiring looted property."

Meanwhile, the present author, on 29 August, had entered into the TLS correspondence:

"May I add a footnote to Edward Ullendorff's reference to the letters sent in 1872 by Emperor Yohannes of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and to Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, which resulted in the British Museum restoring a bound illuminated manuscript, the *Glory of Kings*, to its country of origin.

Yohannes's two letters also asked for the return of one other and even more valued possession which he believed, not unreasonably, had been removed by General Napier's military expedition to Ethiopia four years earlier. This was an early Renaissance depiction on wood of Christ with the Crown of Thorns, an *Ecce Homo* devotional image of probable Flemish or Iberian origin, which must have reached Ethiopia through Portuguese contacts in the 16th or early 17th centuries. Over some two centuries, as recounted in Ethiopian royal chronicles from 1672 onwards, the painting was referred to as the *Kwer'at Re'esu* and was carried into battle by the Emperor's armies. In time it became the most revered possession of the monarchy, it being customary for the Emperor's soldiers to swear their loyalty to him in its name. It also profoundly influenced Ethiopian art, while numerous copies, as manuscript illuminations, icons and, in one instance, a fresco survive from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries."

The letter, reiterating much of what had appeared in other published correspondence by Dr. Pankhurst and the present author himself on the association of the *Kwer'ata Re'esu* with Richard Holmes, concluded as follows:

"Holmes's widow put the painting up for sale in a London auction house in 1917. It was purchased anonymously, but reappeared on the London art market in 1950. The Ethiopian Embassy, warned too late to place a bid, attempted without success to repurchase it from its new owner, also anonymous. It remains in private hands to this day.

If Professor Ullendorff cannot agree with Richard Pankhurst's use of the word 'loot', when applied to the Magdala collection in this country, its appropriateness in the instance of the *Kwer'ata Re'esu* cannot be in doubt by any yardstick: One must hope that, by repurchase, this painting will one day be returned to the nation to which it properly belongs.

On 12 September, Professor Ullendorff replied as follows:

"The story of the Ethiopian *Kwer'ata Re'esu* ('piercing of his (Christ's) head') painting, to which Stephen Bell refers, is of course, well known. It has been described in considerable detail by such masters of the subject as Enrico Cerulli, Stanislaw Chojnacki, Richard Pankhurst, and others. It has generally been held to be 'undoubtedly of foreign inspiration and execution', that is, Flemish or Portuguese. Richard Pankhurst has identified (*Abba Salama*, 10, 1972) its present owner in Portugal. Pankhurst also established that Miss Scott-Elliot of the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, had hoped, (in 1961) that the picture would find its way back to Ethiopia; and that the present Portuguese owner had proposed, apparently unsuccessfully, to the then Portuguese government to present the picture to Emperor Haile Selassie in the course of a state visit to Lisbon."

The *TLS* correspondence concluded, in so far as its Ethiopia content was concerned, with the present author's reply to Professor Ullendorff published on 3 October:

"Edward Ullendorff responding to my own letter of 29 August, has drawn attention to the work of Enrico Cerulli, Richard Pankhurst and Stanislaw Chojnacki in revealing much of the history and influence of the *Kwer'ata Re'esu*. The last named of these authorities has recently examined nearly sixty surviving Ethiopic paintings inspired by the Flemish or Portuguese original from the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Supplement 42 to *Annali del Istituto Universitario di Napoli*, 1985)

However, the story must be brought up to date. The *Kwer'ata Re'esu* appears to be no longer in the possession of the person identified by Dr. Pankhurst in 1979. When I visited Portugal the following year, it was clear that the present owner wishes to remain anonymous. In Ethiopia, meanwhile, interest in the return of a national treasure is as strong as ever; and it has been the subject of a poem by Tsegai Gebre-Medhin, the country's fore-most playwright and poet.

Following my attendance at the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in 1984, I have undertaken an attempt to trace the *Kwer'ata Re'esu* and to assist in its return to the country in whose history it played such a notable part. It would be fitting if none of the cost of its purchase was borne by Ethiopia. Funding should come through a public appeal and, in the meanwhile, any light that could be thrown on the mystery of its whereabouts would be gratefully received.

I hope I may be allowed to make a further point on the wider question of the Magdala manuscripts. Acquired by Britain in circumstances of dubious legality (military victory) nearly 120 years ago, many are known to have belonged to the church of Medhane Alem at Magdala, and are so inscribed. This is acknowledged, for example in Professor Ullendorff's own *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (1951). The whiff of a sacrilegious aspect to the acquisition of the Magdala collections is strong."

To the best of the author's knowledge, no further letters on the subject of the Magdala loot have appeared in correspondence columns of the British national press since the *TLS* series of 1986. However, a recent letter from the present author to the *Times*, published on 4 April 1988, might be worthy of mention in this context. It was written in response to a recent report by the National Audit Commission,⁵ highlighting some of the problems posed by poor storage conditions of some of the collections not on display to the public:

"Today's *Times* (30 March) contains a disturbing article on the dangers, as reported to Parliament by the National Audit Office, of irreparable damage to priceless treasures in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museums resulting from dirty, damp and overcrowded conditions of storage.

I am one of several correspondents who, over a number of years, have promoted the case within the columns of your newspaper for the return by Britain of *objets d'art* removed from Third World countries, usually by force during colonial campaigns in the last century.

Perhaps the most familiar argument to be deployed against our line - that they are better looked after in Britain than they would be in their countries of origin - will be uttered less vehemently when this subject next comes into public prominence."

No subsequent comment in response to the National Audit Office report was published in the correspondence columns of the *Times*, and the opportunity to continue the debate, perhaps in a specifically Ethiopian context, passed by. Meanwhile, the author contacted the British Library by telephone and received the reassurance that its Ethiopian collection is not affected by the problems referred to in the National Audit Office report, and that all its manuscripts are stored in conditions where temperature and humidity are carefully controlled.

NOTES

1. See Rita Pankhurst: "The Library of Emperor Tewodros II Maqdala (Magdala)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. XXXVI, Part 1, 1973. This is a detailed account of the looting and the subsequent dispersal of the treasure, particularly some 1,000 manuscripts, which survived destruction at the hands of Napier's troops after the fortress had capitulated.
2. This material was published in Richard Pankhurst and Germa-Selassie Asfaw (eds.), *Tax Records and Inventories of Emperor Têwodros of Ethiopia, 1855-1868* (London, 1979)
3. In tandem with the Anglo-Ethiopian Society's campaign is the project of the Ethiopian Microfilm Manuscript Library, based on collaboration between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and the St. John's University in Minnesota in the USA, to microfilm all copies of all church and monastery manuscripts in Ethiopia itself. Since the letter of B.H. Raven-Roberts appeared in the *Times* of 28th October 1981, the Anglo-Ethiopian Society has provided the Institute of Ethiopian Studies with microfilm copies of Ethiopic manuscripts from several British libraries, and the Institute, with foreign assistance, has more recently purchased copies of most of the manuscripts in the British Library's Magdala collection.
4. Alula Pankhurst, "An Early Ethiopian Manuscript Map of Tegra", *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa and London, 1989), vol. II.
5. *Management of the Collections of the English National Museums and Galleries* by the Comptroller and Auditor General. (Her Majesty's Stationary Office)

Additional References

- S. Chojnacki, "The 'Kwera'ta Re'esu': its Iconography and Significance. An Essay in the Cultural History of Ethiopia", *Annali del Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, (1958), XLV, Supplement no. 42, fasc. 1, pp.1-64.
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PART V

ASPECTS OF THE REIGN OF YOHANNES

Yohannes IV and Keren

Adhana Mengste-ab

Keren, known also by its older names of Bogos and Senhit, is situated at a crossroads linking the Nile Valley and the Red Sea ancient caravan routes leading to Metsewa in the north and Matamma in its south-west. Traders from Kassala, Metsewa and Matamma camped at 'Ona on the outskirts of the town.

The nineteenth century has brought to Africa the tragic consequences of colonialism. To make up for his military defeats in Syria and to replace a failed Middle Eastern empire in Africa, Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt transferred his troops from Arabia to Africa. The conquest of the Sudan, which was initiated in the 1820s, was consolidated in 1840 at the fall and occupation of Kassala. In 1844 the Egyptians began to threaten Ethiopia's northern frontier-lands. From the beginning the Egyptians' firm intention was to occupy Keren so that they could link the Nile Valley and the Red Sea coast for trade purposes. In fact, at one time, they conducted feasibility studies to construct a railway line to connect Metsewa with Kassala. Their real intentions were delayed and camouflaged under Said Pasha only vividly to appear under Ismail Pasha. Despite Theodore II's attempts to resurrect a strong united Ethiopia, Yohannes IV inherited a weak and divided country, each warlord vying against his neighbour for military and political power. It was an excellent time for external intruders, such as Egypt.

Abba Bezbiz Kassa (Kahsay) consolidated his power in the territories of Tigray and Marab-mellash even before he was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia after defeating *Wagshum* Gobeze (Emperor Teklegiorgis) at the battle of Assam (Adwa). He replaced *Dej.* Hailu Teweldemedhin, the governor of Marab-mellash by *Dej.* Weldemichael Solomon from the rival house of Tsa'azzega. The former was imprisoned for intrigues with the Egyptians, due to old rivalry between the ruling houses of Tsa'azzega and Hazzega for the control of Hamassen, and entrusted it to a certain René, his French gunsmith, a mechanic from Marseilles, in 1868. This man reached Keren at the command of one hundred riflemen and stayed there with his Ethiopian wife for a short time while, may be long enough to levy the annual tribute; he was later raised to the rank of *Fitawrari* by Kahsay. This contingent of armed men was intended to be trained in the European fashion by a French traveller, Captain Alexandre Girard. It seems that the lord of Tigray wished to involve the French in the military protection and political influence against Egyptian intrusion into the northern border-lands. He sent an untranslated Amharic letter addressed to Emperor Napoleon III, by-passing the arch intriguer Werner Munzinger, French vice-consul at Metsewa. In the letter Kahsay recalls to the addressee that Napoleon Bonaparte had written to his fore-father Michael

Sehul via Egypt and that copies of his letter were kept in Axum and the Holy Saviour Church in Adua. He desired a Franco-Ethiopian Christian alliance against Muslim Egypt. Woldemichael's pride and anger fueled by Munzinger's sinister and deceitful advice almost exploded into open anger. Offended that Bogos (Keren) was cut out from his governorate, of which he considered it an integral part, and being given to a foreigner, he instead wanted to invade it and collect the tribute himself. Even worse, at Munzinger's instigation he corresponded with the French authorities and flirted with the idea of French involvement, to the extent of giving the Bogos governorship to Munzinger himself. All this led to his downfall. On 12 September 1869 Woldemichael was denounced as a Gobeze partisan and was imprisoned while attending Mesqel celebrations. Kahsay was angry at his independent ways and above all his independent correspondence with Napoleon III. Marab-mellash was given over to *Wagshum* Gabru. Woldemichael bribed his jailers and escaped from prison on 10 July, 1871, only to submit after learning that Gobeze was defeated and his sons were prisoners of Kahsay. He was later given the Mekhi'aw Qolo (a portion of Marab-mellash), at which decision he was not happy at all. During the campaign against the Egyptians Yohannes needed the help of the local chiefs in Marab-mellash, for which reason he was lenient with Woldemichael. The latter fought valiantly at the battle of Guedaguidi only to defect to the enemy side at the battle of Gura.

Before actually occupying Keren and the adjacent districts the Egyptians weakened them by incursions, raids and invasions. Pillage, plunder and wanton destruction of life and property became the order of the day. Munzinger, much aware of the shape of things in the area, wanted to lend his services to Egypt. A soldier of fortune, while still a French consular agent he wanted to possess the territory somehow. The people desperate for assistance several times asked for French help against the Egyptian intrusions, knowing very well their highland brothers could not do anything to help them against this menace, which fact they mentioned in one of their letters written on 1 January 1865, and sent by their chiefs to the French vice-consul at Metsewa. In it they solicited foreign assistance and protection, saying:

"...እኛ ብዙ ዘመን ለሐበሻ ንጉሥ ተገዝነ ነገር ገን ከሂ፤ ዘመን ወደሀ ከሚከቡን እስላሞች እንደያድኑን ኃይል አጥተው በመሐከል ቀረን። በወናር መንግሥት ጊዜ የሚያስጨንቀን አልነበረም። ቱርክ ገን ለምሃርና ባርካ ከገዛ ወደሀ ብዙ ጊዜ ዘረፈን በኃይል እንድናሰልም ምሽቶቻችን ልጆቻችን ወሰዱብን። ጥረቶቻችን ግርያ ሐላሐል ሐባብ ይህን ፈርተው አለለው። እኛ እንደነዚያ መሆን ጠላን በሃይማኖታችን በነጣ መኖር ወደድን። በመጨረሻ ቱርክ ሲዘርፈን የፈረንሲስ ንጉሥ ነገራችን ይዞ እንደረደን አወቅን፡"

"...we were ruled by the Abyssinian king for many centuries. Since two hundred years as they could not save us from the Muslims who surround us due to lack of power we have been abandoned. During the Sennar kingdom era we were left in peace. After the Turks occupied Samhar and Barka they raided us many times and in order to force us into Islam they seized our wives, children, and cattle. Our neighbours, the Maria, Halhal and Habab, afraid of the consequences, have been converted to Islam. We hate to become like them, we rather prefer to remain in our religion and freedom."

"We are aware of the fact that when the Turks raided us last time the French king remembered our cause and helped us..."¹

Their appeal for urgent help from fellow Christians was not limited to the French: they also wrote similar letters to the British. But opportunists like Munzinger, however, had other plans for the area. At the head of 120,000 men he occupied Keren on 2 July, 1872, not long after Emperor Yohannes's coronation. A well timed move since he knew the country's internal situation fairly well. Yohannes's vassal, *Dej*. Tassera, was defeated by the Oromo at Maqdala, and was forced to withdraw to Soqota, and all this was due to Yohannes's sudden return to Adua from his Azebo expedition. The Emperor now could not travel to Gondar to receive the formal submission of *Ras* Woregna at the risk of exposing his northern flank. Keren was lost during his southern expedition and now he was faced with another dilemma. The situation was fluid. The Egyptians, imitating the British example, took advantage of the situation, expecting another Maqdala debacle for Ethiopia. Although cautious not to be stabbed in the back by insubordinate vassals when facing the menace from the north, Yohannes was not afraid openly to challenge Munzinger: "Get out of this country, otherwise, I will come to fight!"² But for the time being he could not do more than launch a diplomatic campaign in Europe in order to buy time. Bogos was ruled undisputedly by the Egyptians for three years, 1872-1875. The encirclement and harassment continued. In 1872 the Emperor was deprived of his annual salt revenue of 1,000,000 francs by the seizure of the salt plains. Nevertheless Yohannes continued his internal consolidation and diplomatic activities. I quote from one of the protest letters to the European potentates:

"...በገራ ለዘቦ የግባላ የጋላ የሰላም አገር ለላ ከርሱ ቪዩታ ተነሳብኝ
 እርሱን ለግጥፋት ዘመትህ እርሱንም በእግዚአብሔር ኃይል አጠፋሁት።
 ወደ ከተማዩ አድዋ ብመለስ ቱርኮች እስላሞች የእስግላል ባሻ ሰዎች
 ለገራን ይዘውት ለገኘሁ። ፈታደቸው ገን እኔን ሊያሰልሙ ሕዝቤንም
 ባርያ አድርገው ሊሸጡ ነው። ምነው ጥኑ ክርስትያን ነዎና ይህንን
 ደብዳቤ የጻፍኩልኛ የገራን የተገፋሁትን ወራ ሊሰሙት ብዮ ነው።"

ተጽሕፈት በ፲ ቀን ነሐሴ በ፲፱፻፲፫ ነወ። ዓመተ ምሕረት (13 August 1872) ዓድዋ ከፋግ³

"... በኔ እንኳ የሂደው አገር በሪ ዐሣውርታ ዙሳ አስገደበትላ
 ዓድሃብተማርያም ባርያ ቀይሕ ባርያ ጸሊም ዓድወለተማርያም ሐላሐላ
 ሞገስ ታንደር ሕቡብ መንሳዕ ቢደል ዉተል ጉሕመት ደግ ደህንሳ ሸሆ
 ወይታ ታኩያ እናርያ ሐባብ ኩናግ ባዘን ጋላቤት ገደርፍ ሃራር። ይህ
 ነው እርቅግ ነገሥተተ ምድር ከላስታረታቸሆኝ ነገሥተተ ሰግይን
 ወርደው ያስታርቁኛል የቶጦርኩትን አገራን አስመልሱልኝ እርቅንም እኪ
 አስታርቁኝ"

ተጽሕፈት አስመራ ከተማ እመ ፲ወደሰ የካቲት በ፲ወ፲፻፳ወ፫ (17
 Feb. 1881)

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God; praise be to Him. An epistle of the Elect of God, Yohannes, King of Seyon, King of Kings of Ethiopia. May it reach the illustrious and esteemed Welhelm [= Welhelm I.], Kaiser of Garmanya [= Germany], King of Buresya [= Prussia]. How are you? My army and I are well, honour and thanks be to the God of the saints, for His mercy is everlasting. Your respected letter with its insignia, which was written in clear conscience and enlightened mind, reached me through the hands of the chief councillor. Dr. Girhard Rolfs [= Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs]. I was delighted to hear of the well-being of your army, the safety of your country and of your consideration for the settlement of my case. As far as the peace settlement [of the dispute] is concerned, I had written to you last year how the Turks inflicted injustice upon me; Your Majesty, too has, heard it. As to those [Turks], they have not yet refrained from doing justice to me even today. To illustrate this to you, they ambushed and exterminated the people I sent to the Šangella country to collect tribute. They took the Christians and Islamized them. This happened not long ago. It was as recently as last November. My restraint is not due to lack of power, thank God, but because I did not want [to act] without your, the sovereign's warrant. In fact, I have not retaken my land which is nearby, let alone that which is afar. And now, if you intend to mediate between us, I agree on condition [that I get] the country as it was at the hands of my fathers, the Emperors of Ethiopia, before Mahamad Grañ devastated it, and the state disintegrated. After the invasion by Grañ, it was later regained by Sarda Dengel, Iyasu and Fasil. Then arose one called Gugsä and let it once again be taken. In fact, is there anything about Ethiopia that you, the sovereigns of Europe, do not know? Its limits to the east and south are the sea. To the west and the north where there is no sea, all

the lands - except Noba, Sawakin, Kartum, Barbar, Senar, Ennarya, Sudan, Balaw, Dengula, Haran Dawa, Gaši, Mesewa, Badaw, Šihu, Teltal - inhabited by the Galla, the Šanqella and the Adal are mine. As a matter of fact, a country called Harar in Šawa has recently been occupied. I listed all this in detail in order to make the boundaries of my country known. The following are the lands that were lost in the time of the princes under Ali and Webé as well as recently under Negus Téwodros and myself: Bori, Asawerta, Zula, Asagade, Baqla, Ad Habta Maryam, Barya, Qayih, Barya Sallim, Ad Walatta Maryam, Halhal Mogas, Tander, Hebub, Mansa'e, Bidal, Catal, Guhmat, Dume, Dahmila, Šaho, Wayta, Takuy, Ennarya, Habab, Kunama, Bazen, Galla Bet, Gadarif, Harar. With regard to mediation, will the Heavenly Kings descend to reconcile me if you, the earthly Kings do not! Restore the lands I have listed as mine. And I consent to your mediation. But I have told your official, chief councillor Dr. Gerhard Rohlf, to represent me at the negotiations, and I seek the permission of Your Majesty so that he may be able to be my representative.

"Written on the 11 Yakkatit 1873 A. Mis. [= 17 February 1881] in the city of Samara."⁴

Britain, France, Germany, Austria, etc., ignored Ethiopian pleas because of their own commercial interests in Egypt. The enemy continued its machinations for the destabilization and dismemberment of the country. Ismail Pasha moved to encircle and crush the Emperor. His real objective was to control the head-waters of the Nile and claim the Red Sea all the way to the coasts of the Indian Ocean. One Egyptian army was sent via the occupied territory to capture Adua, the Emperor's capital. Another was sent to Awsa under Munzinger's command via Tadjura. Both of these efforts were crushed. Yohannes, almost abandoned by his vassals, who wished him doom and extinction, singlehandedly faced the invading army. A resounding victory put the Egyptians to an ignominious defeat. To revenge this shameful encounter with another attempt they hushed up any news of the event and continued preparations for a punitive expedition. Still the Ethiopians put a better trained and equipped army to worse shame. Keren, intended as a gate of conquest and victory, witnessed the shameful flight of an Egyptian army in disarray. Defeated in open battle the Egyptians instigated rebel chiefs to attack the country from their sanctuaries in the occupied territory. Robbers, common criminals and rebels became instruments of revenge and instability. The land was repeatedly devastated, eg. by Woldemichael Solomon, Debbab Araaya, Kassa Gulja (*Abba Kayssi*), Kaffel (Kifleyesus, Goffar), Bahta Hagos, the sons of Woldemichael, etc. Raids, counter-raids, pillaging and plunder ruled the day. On one occasion the Egyptians tried to blackmail the Emperor by offering the notorious *Abba Kayssi* in exchange of Bogos, way back before the definitive occupation of the area.

Even after his two resounding victories over the Egyptians, Yohannes could not recover the occupied territories. The formal restoration of the territory had

to wait for a totally circumstantial event. The Adwa (Hewett) Treaty was signed between Yohannes and the British on 3 July, 1884. On the basis of this treaty Bogos was returned in return for the safe conduct of the Egyptian troops stranded in Kassala, Abedib and Senhit (Keren) by the rise of the successful Mahdist revolution. Through his generalissimo Alula Engeda, Yohannes tried to establish a permanent rule in Keren but failed. Alula could not dislodge the Egyptians ensconced in the Keren fortress with their mountain guns. He could raid the land at will but not govern it. From the heights of Debreseina he was able to proclaim a tax decree, yet its implementation was problematic as long as the Egyptians, who levied their own taxes, were present. Yohannes's misplaced trust in the British further handed over the land to the Italians through deceit and treachery while the ink of the Adwa Treaty was still not dry. It was another tragic coincidence that Keren was occupied by the Italians less than three months after Yohannes's immolation at the battle of Matamma.

NOTES

1. A letter by the Christian chiefs of Ansaba, Bogos, Mensa, Bejjuk, and Ad Gaim to Napoleon III, Emperor of France. As recorded in Abba Teklemariam Semharay's notebook known as Tomare London, Keren Catholic Seminary Library.
2. J. de Coursac, *Le règne de Yohannes* (Romans, 1926).
3. Bairu Tafla, *Ethiopia and Germany: Cultural, Political and Economic Relations, 1871-1936* (Wiesbaden, 1981).
4. *Ibid.*, p.200.

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Foreign Educated Ethiopians in Ethiopian Service at the Time of *Atsé Yohannes*

Richard Pankhurst

Though *Atsé Yohannes*, the arch-conservative as many see him, lacks the halo of innovation worn in the popular mind by both *Téwodros* and *Menilek*, he was, like both his predecessor and successor, a child of his time, and was, as such, also caught up in the process of modernization. It is in this connection worth recalling that *Yohannes* was the first Ethiopian ruler to institute a national flag (described below); the first to appoint a Consul abroad (a certain Mr. Samuel H. King in London); the first to be inoculated with modern vaccine against smallpox (administered by his Greek physician Dr. Parsis)¹; and the first to gain access to substantial quantities of modern breech-loading rifles (captured for the most part from the Egyptians at the battles of Gundet and Gura in 1875 and 1876 respectively).

The reign of *Yohannes* was also important in the story of the foreign education of Ethiopians, as well as of the utilization by the Ethiopian state of the service of those of its subjects who had studied abroad. Foreign education had been of only minimal significance in the first part of the nineteenth century, but began to have an impact in the second, for it was then that a handful of foreign-educated Ethiopians began to play a notable role in state affairs. Their presence is particularly noticeable during the time of *Yohannes*, who, though, as we shall see, in no way an initiator of study abroad, can be considered as its legatee.

Ideas of Sending Students Abroad

Foreign education during the reign of *Yohannes*, as in earlier times, was, it should be recalled, not yet the responsibility of Ethiopian rulers, let alone in any sense of the Ethiopian state. Throughout most of the nineteenth century such youngsters as were educated abroad were in most cases taken out of the country by foreign visitors, mainly missionaries. The latter had included the Italian *De Jacobis*, who took 23 young men to Rome for religious studies as early as 1841; the Swiss Protestant *Waldmeier* and his colleagues who during the reign of *Téwodros* brought eight young men, most of them converted *Falashas*, to the *St. Chrischona* missionary institute near Basle; and the French *Capuchins*, who enrolled 18 youngsters, mainly *Oromos*, in the *St. Michel College* at Marseilles in 1869.

The idea that Ethiopian rulers - or their foreign friends (or enemies) should concern themselves with sending students abroad for secular education or training did not emerge until after the reign of Yohannes. One of the most enlightened travellers of the immediately preceding period, the Englishman Mansfield Parkyns, had criticized European missionaries in 1853 for distributing Bibles, which few people, he declared, had the interest or ability to read, and went on to argue that Europeans wishing to "do any good" in Ethiopia should instead try to "teach people to think".² This, as he saw it, could best be done by establishing a school. There his recommendation stopped, for he does not seem to have ever dreamt that Ethiopians might embark on study or training overseas.

Only a decade later, however, it was reported by another British traveller, Henry Dufton, that the pioneering Emperor Téwodros, in the late 1850s or early 1860s, had "contemplated sending natives to England or France for the purpose of learning useful trades".³ Nothing came of the plan, but the idea of study abroad soon gained increasing currency. In 1868, the year of Téwodros's death and the beginning of Yohannes's rise to power, a French traveller Captain Alexandre Girard, talking to Däjazmach Kasa (the future Emperor Yohannes), observed:

"If I may permit myself to give you some advice, you should at once request the establishment in Paris of an Ethiopian school, where you could send each year 50 young men to complete their education by the study and application of useful sciences. You will thus have more enlightened *Debteras* and *Alaqa*s..."

"In antiquity there was a great people who dominated the then entire known world. This was the Roman people - it was by sending their children to Greece, to Athens, that its government formed this legion of young men which enacted laws the wisdom and foresight of which have endured throughout the centuries".⁴

Explaining that the Egyptians of his day had abandoned their earlier obscurantism, Girard went on to prophesise that the opening of the Suez Canal - which was then being cut - would result in the coming to Ethiopia of increasing numbers of foreigners; and that the latter in their turn would bring in new ideas which would lead inexorably to changes in the mentality and customs of the Ethiopians.⁵

Kasa, who does not seem to have been much impressed by the Frenchman's discourse, thanked the visitor "warmly" for his advice, politely said he would "make every effort to follow it"⁶ - but took no action whatsoever in the direction Girard had proposed.

The despatch of young Ethiopians for study in other countries was again proposed a decade and a half later - in the last years of Yohannes's reign - by

several other foreigners. In 1884 Robert Napier, who had commanded the British expedition against Téwodros a generation earlier and took an enduring interest in Ethiopian affairs, urged the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, to have "a moderate number of young Abyssinians" sent for education abroad, preferably to Bombay or Madras⁷. The Foreign Office, however, lacked the imagination - or funds - required to implement the proposal. The Foreign Secretary nevertheless later agreed that one young Ethiopian should be entrusted to the care of an English clergyman, the Rev. J.E.P. Bartleet, of Norfolk, who agreed to provide tuition, board and lodging for the modest sum of £10 per month. Treasury permission was also obtained to provide the youth with a single set of clothes to be purchased from the Army and Navy Stores.⁸ What the young man was to wear when these were being cleaned was not mentioned!

The idea of taking a few Ethiopians abroad also occurred at about the same time to the Russian Cossack adventurer Nicholai Ashinoff. To further his ambitions he visited far-off Ethiopia, and returned with two youngsters, a boy and a girl. The former was placed in a monastery; the latter in a nunnery. The outcome of the project, like much connected with Ashinoff, is shrouded in mystery⁹, but a glimpse of the educational experiment is provided in a contemporary report by the British ambassador to St. Petersburg who notes that the boy was very headstrong, complained that his teachers failed to recognize his merits, and often gave way to violent temper. To quieten him the Russian Foreign Minister arranged on one occasion that a monk should take the boy for a ride on a tram. The trip, the ambassador learnt from the Minister, went well until "a respectable Russian citizen turned round to his neighbour and said, 'This is a negro', upon which the young Abyssinian, who is only 12 years old, flew at the burgher's throat and explained in excellent Russian, 'Tu m'appelles nègre: toi-même tu n'est qu'un cochon Russe' at which his excellency chuckled a good deal".¹⁰

A more ambitious plan for the education of Ethiopians abroad was later put forward, in 1888, by the French Vice-Consul at Massawa, François Soumagne, who in a draft Franco-Ethiopian treaty drawn up for Yohannes, proposed an article (Article 4) which declared:

"With the objective of contributing to the general development of the Ethiopian nation, the French Government engages itself, if the King of Ethiopia so wishes, to entertain and educate at its own expense, at intervals of three or four years, ten or so young Ethiopians, to whom shall be given the necessary education in military arts, medical science, commerce and industry. These young men at the conclusion of their studies shall be brought back at the expense of the Government of the French Republic, to one of the Red Sea ports neighboring Ethiopia."¹¹

This grandiose initiative, like the advice of Girard and the proposals of Napier before it, bore, however, no fruit. Yohannes, like most of his predecessors, was happy when necessary or convenient to use the services of foreign-educated Ethiopians, mainly for the purpose of interpreting or translation, but seems to have been indifferent, if not actually averse, to sending his compatriots abroad for study. The result was that the few young Ethiopians who travelled outside the country during his reign continued for the most part to do so as a result of chance meetings with foreign missionaries, adventurers or other travellers - though a few youngsters, as we shall see, were also educated through the initiative of their parents or relatives.¹²

Prominent among the missionaries of the later nineteenth century who took Ethiopians abroad for study were those of the Swedish Evangelical Mission, the Evangeliska-Fosterlands-Stiftelsen. This organization was responsible for the education of the Oromo ex-slave Onesimos Nesib, the future translator of the Bible into Afan Oromo, who left for Sweden in 1873. Later, in the following decade, the mission also sent to Sweden four young men from the north of the country (which at about this time became the Italian colony of Eritrea). They included Haylä Mika'él Kidané, who on his return became a teacher at Bäläsa, and two future pastors, Tāwäldä Mādhān Gäbrä Mādhān and Marqos Germal, the latter of which later created a furor in Stockholm when he became the first African to commit the then unthinkable act, for a coloured man, of marrying a white woman.¹³

Yohannes and Foreign Education

The unwillingness of Yohannes to countenance a system of foreign-education, such as that proposed by various foreigners, owed much, it may be surmised, to the fact that study outside the country would have seemed to him entirely alien to Ethiopian tradition and culture, as well as to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which he staunchly sought to defend. He might also have noticed that the foreign-educated Ethiopians of his day, who had studied under foreign missionary auspices, tended to be alienated from the Ethiopian Orthodox faith as well as from the Ethiopian way of life in general. The Coptic *Abun*, or Patriarch, and most of the Ethiopian Orthodox priesthood, would have been particularly concerned at this effect of foreign education, and would have reinforced his fears of foreign influence. Given his unflinching opposition to foreign missionaries¹⁴ Yohannes would moreover have tended to be suspicious of, if not actually unsympathetic, to those of his compatriots who were educated by them. When two returnees, Mika'él Arāgawi and Agājé Sahlū, who had studied with Protestant missionaries in Switzerland, presented themselves before him wearing shoes, he is reported to have curtly dismissed them, saying, "If you appear again before me, come barefoot; we Ethiopians do not wear shoes; dress yourselves according to the customs of the country"¹⁵

In considering the attitude of Yohannes to foreign education it may also be recalled that not a few of the foreign and missionary-educated Ethiopians of his day found employment in the service of foreigners, rather than at court, from which they therefore tended to be independent, and to some extent may have appeared aloof. Missionary education by this time was moreover leading to both student alienation and unemployment. The British traveller F.L. James, reporting on a visit to the Lazarist school at Kärän, for example noted in 1883:

"The most disheartening part of the mission was, as the Fathers and Sisters confessed to us, the difficulty of finding institutions for their *protégés* after they had reared and educated them. Outcast from their own people and unable to find employment... they are thrown on their own resources, which proves more fatal to the women than the men"¹⁶

Opposition to foreign education may also have been influenced by the fact that the foreigners who employed modern-educated Ethiopians, and with whom the latter tended to consort, were in many cases potential, if not actual enemies of the country.¹⁷ The Ethiopian servants of such foreigners were therefore liable to be mistrusted, or in certain instances even hated or despised. Ras Alula, on encountering two Ethiopians, Gencio and Zälälé, who served as enemy interpreters during the Italian invasion of 1887 was quoted as saying to them, "You two are to be blamed more than them [the Italians] for having served them as guides and given them information about the route"¹⁸

Though modern education, as we now believe, was in the long run essential for the independence and development of Ethiopia, there was thus much about it that must have seemed suspect to Yohannes. Rejected to all intents and purposes by the hierarchy of his Church, even by the *Abun* who came from Egypt and was therefore supposedly aware of the outside world, it would not have escaped the notice of the monarch that it was an innovation urged upon him almost exclusively by foreign diplomats or adventurers who had no interest in the preservation of Ethiopia's independence or religion, but who on the contrary were serving their own personal or national interests, and in many cases indeed working for the subversion or dismemberment of the country.

Three Foreign-Educated Ethiopians in the Service of Yohannes

Despite his unwillingness to promote education abroad - a policy which was to be initiated only by his successor Menilek - Yohannes made good use of several foreign-educated Ethiopians. The object of the present paper is to recall the lives of three of the most prominent of them who during his reign played a notable rôle in the perpetuation and modernization of the Ethiopian state - and a fourth in enemy employ who gave him some sound advice.

Mahdärä Qal Tāwäldä Mädhēn

One of the most interesting of the small band of foreign-educated Ethiopians of the reign of Yohannes was Mahdärä Qal Tāwäldä Mädhēn, a youth from Tegré who had travelled to Paris with Théophile Lefebvre of the French scientific mission of the early nineteenth century, and had been introduced by him to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Guizot, and the French Minister of Marine, the Baron Mackau, both of whom became his patrons.

Mahdärä Qal was subsequently placed in a Jesuit educational establishment, the Collège Henri IV, where he remained for three years, after which he became disaffected, and turned to the British who arranged for him to enter a Protestant college in Malta. From there he was taken to England where he showed his devotion by frequently visiting his old friend Guizot who had by then gone into exile as a result of the French Revolution of 1848. Mahdärä Qal later travelled to Egypt to continue his studies with the Protestant missionary educator Mr. Lieder, and did not return to his native land until 1856, the year of Emperor Téwodros's coronation.

Mahdärä Qal, who had thus been abroad for no less than twelve years, is reported to have spoken both English and French "fairly well" and was also proficient in Arabic. He was a loyal supporter of Téwodros, but was later quoted as criticizing his master's decision to face the British at Mäqdäla. He declared that the monarch, on the enemy's approach, should have taken to the hills and harassed the invader as Abdel Kader had harassed the French in Algeria. If Téwodros had done that, he believed, "not a single Englishman would have escaped; everyone without exception would have found their grave in our country".¹⁹

Mahdärä Qal, like many of Téwodros's followers, later attached himself to the latter's successor Yohannes who made good use of his knowledge of foreigners, their languages and their modes of thought. Mahdärä Qal thus worked for Yohannes as an interpreter during the visit to Däbrä Tabor of Colonel (later General) Charles Gordon, a British officer who served as Khedive Ismael of Egypt's governor of the Equatorial Provinces as much of the Sudan was then called. Gordon, who though British, and a fanatical Christian, was in the employ of a Muslim potentate, made a bad impression in Ethiopia, the more so as on his master's orders he opposed Yohannes's demands for the restitution of border territories then recently overrun by the Egyptians. In the circumstances it was scarcely surprising that Gordon and Mahdärä Qal - an ardent Ethiopian patriot - had little rapport. Gordon thus later wrote about Mahdärä Qal critically as "a great scamp"²⁰ - what the latter thought about the visitor, a European Christian serving the interests of the Muslim invader of his country, is not recorded.

Another glimpse of Mahdärä Qal is provided by William Winstanley, a British envoy who met him at about the same time in the company of Yohannes and the latter's military commander, *Ras* Alula, whom he helped to unfurl an Ethiopian flag which the monarch had then recently instituted. This standard, we are told, was:

"a gorgeous production of silk, a tricolour, the coloured divisions running laterally. The highest portion was crimson, the centre white, and the lowest amethyst blue. The whole was surrounded by a rich gold fringe. On the white ground was a gilt and painted representation of the Lion of Judah, with a defiant tail, and a crucifix in his right paw."²¹

Mahdärä Qal was also involved over the years in the translation of much of Ethiopia's diplomatic correspondence with other countries. Sometimes referred to in European circles as the Emperor's "Foreign Secretary" he translated many important communications, including those to and from Queen Victoria and her Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville, in 1873 and 1875, and on at least one occasion inserted a significant passage of his own in one of Yohannes's letters.²²

Mercha Wärqé and Yohannes Mäshäsha

An even more renowned foreign-educated official in the service of Emperor Yohannes was Mercha Wärqé, an Ethiopian of partial Armenian descent who had studied in India. His father, Wärqé Karapet,²³ who had lived in Shäwa and later at Adwa in Tegré, was perhaps half or more probably a quarter Armenian, and had served - like so many Armenians in Ethiopian history - as an envoy for several of the country's rulers. Fully aware of the importance of foreign education he had sent his two sons Gäbru and Mercha, to Bombay where they were enrolled in 1837 in a missionary school run by the famous Scottish educationalist Dr. John Wilson of the Free Church of Scotland.²⁴ The two youths, who were then seventeen and twelve years old respectively, were good linguists: besides Amharic and Tegréña, which they knew before their arrival, they learnt both English and Hindustani, and, because of their parentage, may possibly have known some Armenian.²⁵

After almost five years in India the two brothers were recalled home by their father, and stayed with him in Adwa before making their way back to Bombay in 1847. Two years later, in March 1849, they sat for their final exams, in which they performed brilliantly, and were both awarded prizes. On the following day they sailed on an Arab boat bound for Aden, the first stage on their long journey home. On eventually reaching Adwa, with its remarkable mountain scenery, Gäbru penned an enthusiastic, almost poetic letter to his old master, Dr. Wilson, in which he declared:

"The whole aspect of the land is very pleasant indeed, far exceeding all the beauties of Mahabaleshaw [a locality in India]. Here the mountains are rejoicing in all their joys. Here the valleys are living in solemn silence. Here the rivers and the gentle brooks delight the heart. The forest calls forth admiration. The lion roars..."²⁶

The two brothers were warmly received by the local ruler *Däjazmach* Webé, who, as a sign of his appreciation, presented them with two lionesses, but since the young men had no need of them, they later despatched them to Dr. Wilson. The latter records that they had a "terrible growl", and became "objects of curiosity" in Bombay where they were watched every day by hundreds of Indians who flocked to see them. The upkeep of the beasts, however, soon proved impossible, for they devoured an entire goat at each meal, for which reason he sold them, and despatched the proceeds to assist a school at Adwa which the Wärqé brothers had by then established.²⁷

This school, which had an enrollment of some seventy students, was described at this time as a "vigorous establishment", but soon aroused the antagonism of local interests. Perhaps for this reason its founders soon ceased teaching, and entrusted the institution to a local priest. Not long afterwards, however, the city fell victim to a serious outbreak of smallpox, as a result of which the school was closed, and does not appear to have been reopened.²⁸

Gäbru returned to Bombay for a short visit in 1854, on which occasion he arranged for two of his nephews to study in the city, but he died, shortly after his return home.

Mercha Wärqé meanwhile entered the service of *Däjazmach* Kasa, the future Emperor Yohannes, whom he advised on various aspects of foreign affairs.²⁹ His expertise was particularly important in 1867-8 at the time of the Anglo-Indian expedition against Emperor Téwodros. According to one account, based on information obtained from Mercha himself, the Ethiopians of Tegré, on hearing of the British landing, had at first "laughed at the idea" of a foreign army ever being able to cross their mountains, but he, being familiar with the British and their power, had told his compatriots, "the English have said they'll do it and you'll see they will"³⁰ He is said to have also warned Yohannes of the danger of opposing the invaders. Report has it that when the Emperor learnt of the arrival of the British he at first contemplated fighting them as enemies of the Orthodox faith, but that Mercha advised him against him doing so, by saying:

"If you are absolutely decided on making war against them, we will follow you, as is our duty, sword in hand, to fight for the common cause. But you must know, however, prince, that all the forces of our army cannot compare with those of the English; it is, to speak frankly, as a drop of water in the sea."³¹

Mercha, according to this account, also praised the British ideas of toleration, and declared that, though "no partisan" of the English, he could not forget the benefits he had derived from their education. By such arguments he is said to have persuaded Yohannes to adopt a "more favourable" attitude towards the expedition.³²

Mercha's presence in Tegré was of great interest to the British whose expeditionary force, it will be recalled, was launched from Bombay. Already in the planning stage Colonel Phyre of the British reconnoitring party obtained letters of introduction from Dr. Wilson in Bombay to his former pupil though in the event he was afraid to use them.³³

Kasa, in his negotiations with the British, also saw the great value of the Free Church of Scotland's Ethiopian graduate whose studies had given him a unique understanding of the British, as well as a good working knowledge of English and Hindustani, the two languages of the invading forces. The Emperor accordingly sent Mercha to Sän'afé with letters in which he offered the British "friendship and assistance", proposed to "renew the cordial relations" that had existed between the two countries earlier in the century ("in the days of Walda Selassye and Subagadis"), and declared that he would be glad to receive Napier as soon as he arrived.³⁴

Kasa also appointed Mercha as his liaison officer with the British.³⁵ Dr. Wilson's former pupil was so successful in his talks with the latter that Clements Markham, one of the historians of the expedition, was able to claim, with considerable satisfaction, that when Mercha "stated the views of his master, it appeared that they were almost identical to those of the English Government".³⁶

Mercha, who also provided the British with much important information on the extent of Ethiopian opposition to Téwodros's rule,³⁷ was involved in all the negotiations with Napier - and was highly appreciated by the latter. The British commander is on record as stating of Mercha that "his knowledge of our language and character, and familiarity with our resources, had no doubt a favourable effect on the prospects of the expedition."³⁸ Others expressed themselves even more forcefully. A.J. Shepherd, an Anglo-Indian journalist with the British forces, writing of the assistance provided by the liaison officer - and hence indirectly by the latter's former teacher Dr. Wilson - went so far as to declare:

"The belief that... England owed more to the Free Church of Scotland's Mission Institution in Bombay than it does to any institution in the Presidency, the Government itself and the commissariat department not excepted, was entertained by not a few".³⁹

Markham, as an historian of the expedition, wrote in more sober terms, but nevertheless agreed that Mercha, "a thoroughly good fellow", was "of great use" to the British "throughout the campaign".⁴⁰ Confirmation of this is to be seen in the fact that the British, before leaving Ethiopia, gave the Emperor's liaison officer a "handsome present" of no less than two thousand Maria Theresa dollars, besides a gold watch, and a fine horse valued at £30.⁴¹

Mercha's negotiations with the British proved of even greater profit to Kasa who on the withdrawal of the British obtained a sizeable package of military hardware from them. These weapons - cannons and rifles - contributed greatly, as he himself avowed, to his subsequent assumption of the imperial throne. His liaison officer, one of the principal architects of this successful - albeit as we might now think opportunistic - policy, was accorded the prestigious title of *Liqāmāqwas*, or ceremonial impersonator of the king. "Given the credit of having established friendship with Napier", as Sven Rubenson puts it, he at this stage became "probably" the Emperor's "most important adviser on foreign affairs".⁴²

It was therefore not surprising that shortly afterwards in the summer of 1870 Yohannes should have chosen Mercha as a member of an important mission which he wished to despatch to Britain with a view to obtaining technical assistance, and especially experts to teach his compatriots ironwork and other mechanical skills.⁴³ This initiative was, however, no more successful than Emperor Téwodros's earlier efforts to obtain British assistance, for the Foreign Office, having at that time no desire for further contacts with Ethiopia, instructed its Consul-General in Alexandria, Edward Stanton, to prevent the embassy from making its way to London.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding this setback, Mercha continued to serve Yohannes in the diplomatic field - we find him for example working with Mahdārā Qal, in the spring of 1873, on translations of letters from Queen Victoria and her Foreign Secretary Lord Granville which had arrived at the court during the Emperor's absence on campaign.⁴⁵

Mercha's diplomatic - and linguistic - skills came to the fore once more after the defeat of the Egyptians by Yohannes at the battle of Gura in 1876. The *Liqāmāqwas* was despatched to negotiate with the enemy - who, recognizing his political significance, for a time actually held him as a prisoner. Colonel Dye, an American mercenary with the Egyptian army, described him at this time, correctly, as an "influential counsellor to the King".⁴⁶

Mercha, who had thus had important dealings with both the British in 1867-8 and the Egyptians in 1875-6, was subsequently also involved in the international negotiations culminating in the short-lived Tripartite Treaty of June 1884 between Ethiopia, Britain and Egypt which promised to give Ethiopia unrestricted access to the sea through the port of Massawa, as well as the restoration of the Kārān

area then recently overrun by the Egyptians.⁴⁷ Mercha and his nephew Yohannes Māshāsha, one of the two young men whom his brother Gäbru had taken to India for education a quarter of a century earlier, were at this time both actively involved, as Rubenson states, in "checking the English text against the Amharic."⁴⁸

Shortly after the signing of this crucially significant agreement, the *Liqāmāqwas* was despatched by Yohannes on a much-publicized, though in the final analysis fairly futile mission, to Britain. Though several earlier Ethiopian rulers had made use of foreigners as ambassadors Mercha, it is interesting to note, was the first Ethiopian envoy of Ethiopian nationality to travel to Europe since medieval times.⁴⁹ He was accompanied by his nephew and diplomatic colleague Yohannes Māshāsha.

Mercha, who sailed from Massawa to Aden on a British warship, *H.M.S. Woodlark*, then took the P. & O. liner *Malwa* to Plymouth. He bore letters from Emperor Yohannes to Queen Victoria and Lord Granville, as well as a present for the British monarch in the shape of a three-and-a-half ton elephant called Gwola. The latter was subsequently installed at Her Majesty's wish in the London Zoo where it was reported to be "decidedly playful and skittish", and amused itself by chasing one of its keepers.⁵⁰

The Ethiopian envoy's residence in the British capital - the first of its kind in the annals of Ethiopia's diplomatic history - created considerable interest - and press comment - which is amusing to recall a little over a century later.

Residing at the Alexandra Hotel, an institution then of some importance which had earlier housed embassies from Siam and Malagasy, he was interviewed by one of the principal newspapers of the day, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, whose reporter found him "sitting in an easy chair drawn up by an open window overlooking Hyde Park, and, like any other gentleman of quality, reading the *Times*, by the aid of a glass". Describing the ambassador's clothes, which were clearly out of the ordinary, the journalist continues:

"To a respectable Briton, in orthodox black coat, it is absolutely refreshing to see such a dress as the Envoy wears. A handsome green silk robe, flowered with red and gold, delicately embroidered, was thrown loosely around his shoulders, falling gracefully over an undergarment, close fitting, of plain silk. What could be more picturesque? I asked whether 'his Excellency would wear that dress in his London explorations'. 'The people in the streets like it', he replied simply, 'and it pleases me to give them pleasure'. For, like the rest of us, the Envoy likes attention"

The popular ambassador spent three busy weeks in England. Besides visiting Queen Victoria he met Lord Granville, and held talks at the Italian embassy. (This was, it may be recalled, only a few months prior to the Italian seizure of

Massawa, and details of the discussions at the embassy have still to be investigated). He also inspected an arsenal where it was reported that he "watched some target practice with the Nordenfeldt and new shell guns with deep interest". He likewise attended a service at Westminster Abbey, went to see a comedy at the then popular Alhambra Theatre, visited the Zoo, Madame Tussaud's wax-work exhibition, and the British Museum. He expressed himself much pleased with the latter's reading room, and, when shown the Assyrian sculptures with their representations of ancient animals, was quoted as observing that the people of Ethiopia were "making strenuous efforts to clear the country of lions and other beasts".

Mercha seems to have taken a deep interest in Britain. The *Globe* quoted him as declaring that the spirit of Victorian England as he saw it was "all work, all work, all work". He and his nephew Yohannes were stated to have been "much impressed" with most of what they had seen, especially "the cleanliness" of the streets and the laborious and law-abiding people in them". The ambassadors were reported to have thus gained a valuable realization of the "power and wealth of the English nation".⁵¹

On duly returning to Ethiopia, Mercha, who held a position of great trust, became the Emperor's "chief treasurer"⁵² The confidence Yohannes reposed in him may be illustrated by the following anecdote related by the British traveller A.B. Wylde who relates that on one occasion, after the Emperor had issued the strictest of decrees prohibiting smoking and the taking of snuff, Mercha, a confirmed snuffer, "took out his silver snuff box, a present from an English friend, and was going to help himself quite forgetting he was in the King's presence". The Emperor, who would have probably punished any other offender, merely said "Not before me, Lej Mertcha, whatever you may do before others", whereupon, however, "the box went back into his pocket very quickly".⁵³

Mercha, as a much travelled man, was a friend to many foreign visitors, not a few of whom were received, or actually stayed in his fine house at Adwa.⁵⁴

After their return from their British visit Yohannes Mäshäsha succeeded his uncle as the Emperor's secretary and treasurer⁵⁵ - but died with his master at the battle of Mätämma in March 1889⁵⁶ - just a hundred years ago today.

The death of Emperor Yohannes, coupled as it was with that of his nephew, was a great blow to Mercha. It brought his active involvement in state affairs to a virtual end, and was followed, in 1894, by the Italian occupation of Adwa at which time his house in that city was one of those looted.⁵⁷ By then an old man he nevertheless put on a brave face, went on a mission to Lord Cramer, the British ruler of Egypt, in 1896 for Yohannes's son Ras Mängäsha,⁵⁸ and lived on for several more years, respected by all who met him.

Perhaps his best epitaph are the words of his old friend A.B. Wyldé who wrote that he had "always" found Mercha "truthful and honest", with "a curious mixture of semi-modern ideas grafted on to a stock of fifteenth century civilization". Mercha's idea of the reforms required for his country, the Englishman felt, were, however, both "impossible and impracticable", for the then ruler of Tigré, *Ras Mängäsha*, was "not strong enough to carry them out".⁵⁹ What Mercha's proposed reforms consisted of, however, are unfortunately not recorded.

Pétros Giyorgis

One last foreign-educated Ethiopian deserves our attention: Pétros Giyorgis, for whose history we are indebted in large measure to the researches of Dr. Aleme Eshete.⁶⁰ Pétros, who sometimes referred to himself as "Pétros the Ethiopian", was a young man from Hamasén or northern Tegré who was educated in Cairo, and possibly in Jerusalem. He is said to have had a good knowledge of Arabic, and some English, as well as Amharic and Tegrēñña. Because of his reputation as an interpreter he was chosen by De Martino, the Italian consul in Cairo, to go to Italian-occupied Massawa to serve with an Italian mission to Emperor Yohannes led by General Giorgio Pozzolini in January 1886.⁶¹

Pétros, though an employee of the Italians, was at heart an Ethiopian patriot, and while at Massawa, came in contact with *Ras Alula's* lieutenant *Shaläqa Ar'äya* of Zuqli, and later with both Alula and Emperor Yohannes. Stationed as he was at Massawa the interpreter communicated with the Ethiopian leadership by letter rather than by word-of-mouth, and his correspondence, which is extant, shows his devotion to his country.

In one of the first letters *Shaläqa Ar'äya* appeals to Pétros's patriotism, and begs the good interpreter to provide information about the activities of the Italians, and thus to "send him all their secrets". The *Shaläqa* adds that Pétros will be "rewarded" for his services. Pétros did not, however, require any such inducement, for he gave information to his compatriots freely and enthusiastically. In a letter to Yohannes he emphasized the deceitful character of the Italians and the paltry nature of the presents then being sent to him by them, and wrote:

"...the Italians come to tell Your Majesty that they want friendship; but Your Majesty is too well advised to believe them. The gifts which they bring to Your Majesty, Your Majesty could find in your own kingdom. Moreover these gifts are not worth half the customs which the Italians collect at Massawa".

In another letter Pétros explains to the Emperor the complicity - and duplicity - of the British who by the Tripartite Treaty of 1884 had promised Ethiopia the use of Massawa, and had then broken their word by giving that port to the

Italians. He observes: "The whole problem with Italy from the beginning to the end is the work of the English".

Explaining that the latter had befriended Italy on account of her rivalry with France, and that the Italians had occupied "Arafali, Beilul, Assab, Makalé, which all belong to Your Majesty, King of Seyon and Ethiopia", he comments:

The countries of the Italians are called Napoli, Roma, Venezia... If they really want friendship, they should stay in their country and contact Your Majesty from there".

This observation was to be echoed in the utterances of *Ras* Alula who for example wrote to the Italian commander, General Gené, that peace between Ethiopia and the Italians was possible only "if you stay in your own territory", and later told the British envoy Gerald Portal that "the Italians should come to Sa'ati only if he could go to Rome as governor".⁶²

In his letter to the Emperor Pétros continued:

"Now the Italians have hired me as their interpreter, and I will make it my duty to communicate the whole truth about them to the government of Your Majesty".

To Alula he wrote in more dramatic vein: "The Faranje [i.e. Europeans] and the *qenqen*⁶³ are the same. The *qenqen* is the smallest of insects, but it eats up a large tree, and causes it to dry up and fall down".⁶⁴

Such observations were doubtless enlightening to the Ethiopian leadership to which they were addressed. If not fully taken to heart by Yohannes, who perhaps did not ever fully appreciate the dangers from Europe - or the insincerity of the British - they were surely not lost on *Ras* Alula, who, as Wylde observed, "never believed the Italian officials and would never trust them".⁶⁵

Conclusion: Mahdärä Qal, Mercha Wärqé, Yohannes Mäshäsha, and Pétros Giyorgis

These four foreign-educated Ethiopians, as we have seen,, played a notable role in a period in which relations with other countries - in particular with Britain, Egypt and Italy - were of exceptional importance, and in which the continued existence of the Ethiopian state was indeed at times threatened. The presence of Mahdärä Qal, Mercha Wärqé and Yohannes Mäshäsha at the court of Yohannes, and of Pétros Giyorgis in the enemy camp, was useful moreover in that it provided the Ethiopian ruler with information essential for the shaping of state policy. So far from being, in Gibbon's famous phrase, "forgetful of the world by

whom they were forgotten", the Ethiopians of this period - or at least the foreign-educated among them - took a keen interest in the international scene, and Yohannes was in consequence better informed about the world about him than most of his predecessors. Evidence of Ethiopian interest in outside affairs at this time is provided *inter alia* by a letter of 1879 from General Gordon, written in response to a request from "the King's interpreter", asking that his "newspaper man" should despatch a number of British journals to Ethiopia regularly. The papers mentioned were the *Weekly Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and "either the *Graphic* or the *Illustrated London News*". They were to be addressed to "H.M. King Johannis, of Abyssinia", at "Massawa, Red Sea"⁶⁶

The era under discussion, we may conclude, thus witnessed the appearance on the stage of at least four notable foreign-educated Ethiopians who deserve our attention in any proceedings, like the present, which are centred on the centenary of their master *Atsé* Yohannes.

NOTES

1. On the role of the Emperor's Greek advisers see: T. Natsoulas, "Yohannes's Greek Advisers" *North East African Studies* (1985), VII, No. 3, pp. 21-40.
2. M. Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia* (London, 1853), I, 147-60.
3. H. Dufton, *Narrative of a Journey through Abyssinia* (London, 1867), p.167.
4. A. Girard, *Souvenir d'un voyage en Abyssinie* (Le Caire, 1873), p.205.
5. *Ibid.*, p.206.
6. *Ibid.*, p.207.
7. Great Britain, P.R.O., F.O.1/30, Napier to Granville, 2 January, 1884.
8. F.O. 1/31, Correspondence of 6 and 19 September 1886.
9. C. Jesman, *The Russians in Ethiopia. An Essay in Futility* (London, 1958), p.24. See also C. Zaghi, *I russi in Etiopia* (Napoli, 1972), I, 55-104.
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42. Rubenson, *Survival*, p.20.
43. F.O. 1/28, Kasa to Clarendon, 16 August 1870, Kasa to Granville, 24 August 1870; 95/729, Kasa to Victoria, 25 August 1870.
44. Rubenson, *op.cit.*, p.280.
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49. On this mission see also Pankhurst, "The History of Ethiopian-Armenian Relations", pp.306-10.
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55. Portal, *op.cit.*, pp.32, 155-7. See also House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting Mr. Portal's Mission to Abyssinia* (London, 1888), p.31.
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61. Haggai Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea during the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography of Ras Alula* (East Lansing, Mass., 1982), p.93.
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63. On the insect see Käsaté Berhan Tässäma, *Yamareñña Mäzgäbä Qalat* (Addis Ababa, 1951 E.C.), p.430. A somewhat different Amharic saying that the *färänjoč*, or Europeans, entered like thread into the eye of a needle, but then expanded like a *wakqa*, or sycamore tree, was later quoted in I. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano* (Roma, 1901), col.874.

64. Quoted in Gerima Tafféré, *Yemākāra dāwāl* (Asmara, 1963, E.C.), p.8.
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Prologue to the Ethio-Sudanese Frontier*

Tesema Ta'a

Most serious scholars argue that although there were other Pre-Aksumite states, ancient Ethiopia emerged as a strong power with Axum at about 100 B.C. Through time, Christianity was introduced as a state religion in 333 A.D. which became one of the crucial factors for the expansion of the Axumite Kings and the periodic clashes with the neighboring ancient kingdoms in South Arabia and the Sudan as well as for peaceful political and trade relations.

In the second half of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th, Islam, the new religion, made tremendous headway in to the Sudan, resulting in a Muslim stronghold in the region as opposed to Christianity in northern Ethiopia. Religious difference was one of the causes for Muslim-Christian wars in which one party strove to dominate the other to effect a change in the geo-political frontier of the area in its own favour.

The physical frontier between Ethiopia and the Sudan runs from the Beni Amer region in the north down to Lake Rudolf in the south. The geographical boundary seems unsatisfactory from ethnic point of view because it cuts across various single-descent groups, such as the Anuak, Beni Amer, Nuer and others, dividing and placing them under different sovereignties. It is, however, important to remember that this problem is not unique to Ethiopia and the Sudan but true of most African countries as one of the legacies of colonialism.

The first step towards the making of modern Sudan was taken when Mohammad Ali, the Egyptian Viceroy of the Ottoman Sultan, conquered the Sudanese provinces of Nubia, Sennar, and Kordofan.¹ Mohammad Ali conquered the Sudan because he needed manpower to strengthen his army which he wanted to organize on a European model, and sought to exploit the largely illusory gold resource of Fazogli and Beni Shangul. He also entertained notions of securing control to the sources of the Nile, the region's major trade routes, conquering Ethiopia and dominating the whole area between the Red Sea and the Nile. In the struggles to dominate Ethiopia, Mohammad Ali counted on the religious differences of the people in the Ethio-Sudanese frontier districts. This was quite

* This paper is part of an ongoing research which aims at highlighting the socio-economic and political impact of Ethio-Sudanese frontier disputes on the local peoples during the period 1881-1898. For the present purpose, however, it will only deal with the 1881-1889 period.

clearly manifested in his determination to establish his authority in the lowland region where the Muslim communities lived whom he considered were the "enemies of the Christian tribes of the interior".² Although his conquests were limited to Dongola, Shendi, Sennar and Kordofan³ there was a continuous sporadic warfare between Ethiopia and Egyptian-Sudan up to the rise of Mohammad Ahmad ibn al-Saiyid,⁴ the founder of Mahdist state in the Sudan.

The Egyptians undertook a series of punitive expeditions against Ahmad Kashif governor of al Qadarif and al Rashid, attacked Qura, an Ethiopian frontier district ruled by Dejazmatch Kinfu. In turn, Kinfu organized a large army of 20,000 and marched against the Egyptians. He defeated Ahmad's troops, killed many soldiers, took some important notables as captives and returned to Gondar victoriously in 1837.⁵

The bone of contention between the Egyptian authorities in the Sudan and the Ethiopian governors of the western region was undoubtedly, "the control over tribes, trade and tribute on the frontier."⁶ Indeed, this has been the case with that area throughout its 19th century history, even when the leadership of both countries changed from time to time.

When Tewodros emerged as the most powerful leader of Ethiopia in 1855 by crushing the various regional war-lords, it was believed that he would launch a major attack on the Egyptians as early as possible. Contemporary writers reported that he had a severe anti-Muslim internal policy and even planned to divert the flow of the Nile to ruin Egypt. It is apparent that Tewodros' policy was to revenge his serious defeat by the Egyptians at Dabarki in 1848.⁷

Although it is unreasonable to think that boundary delimitations can stop the outbreak of hostilities and solve frontier problems between countries, undemarcated or unsettled boundaries have generally provided opportunities for aggression as in the case of Egyptian-Sudan and Ethiopia. Douin has summed up the situation:

"In this direction, no *de jure* boundary delimits the respective possessions of Egypt and Ethiopia; between the two states there extends a contested zone where the *de facto* boundary moves as either of these countries show aggressive dispositions. This zone forms, at the foot of the highlands of Abyssinia, a vast semi-circle which extends from Qallabat near the Atbara to the neighborhood of Massawa on the Red Sea".⁸

In the contested zone where the Egyptians had successfully penetrated before 1855, some communities did acknowledge their dependence on both Ethiopia and Egypt. Metemma, for example, paid tribute to both governments just to maintain its position as a commercial centre.⁹ In the Bertha country of Beni Shangul the Turco-Egyptian government almost tripled taxation and tribute in order to

compensate for its unprofitable gold mining projects. All the Bertha were asked to pay the yearly tribute in dura, cattle or goats. Later on they were also compelled to pay in gold which forced them to abandon their homes and cultivation to pan gold to fulfill their tribute obligations. Those who failed hid in the inaccessible mountains for fear of being enslaved.¹⁰ Clearly the inhabitants of the frontier districts constantly and continuously suffered from paying heavy tribute, usually to two competitive governments at one time or another. The natives were exposed to exactions, plunder, and looting by brigands for in most cases the protection given by either government was quite nominal.¹¹ The competition between the leaders of the two countries to control the frontier districts had, therefore, almost always subjected the people to economic depression and war destruction. Their exposure to the bandits obstructed trade and made them socially insecure which increased their agony.

Throughout the region, people took refuge wherever they could. For instance, after Tewodros came to power Umar Nimir and Abu Rawash, two Sudanese chiefs, crossed the frontier into Ethiopia, perhaps to avoid heavy taxation and political domination by the Egyptian government. Nimir complained about the infiltration of the Egyptian soldiers into the borders of Ethiopia. Tewodros suggested to Said Pasha that the problem be resolved through negotiations. At this time he did not make any remark about the disputed territories, and Ethio-Egyptian relations remained friendly at a higher level as late as 1861,¹² even though skirmishes on the frontier continued. Tewodros might have been forced to follow a policy of appeasement because he was preoccupied with internal problems caused by regional feudal lords and the clergy.

In the years 1862 and 1863 Ethio-Egyptian relations deteriorated. Tewodros is usually blamed for having started off the crisis by his hatred of everything Muslim and his ambition to emerge as a famous conqueror. Because of Tewodros' decision to invade the Egyptian-Sudan, Said Pasha appointed Musa Hamid Pasha to safeguard the Sudan against Ethiopia. On the other hand there were rumors that Said was on his way to attack Ethiopia with 40,000 men.¹³ Most probably, this report may have been circulated by the Ethiopian government authorities for propaganda purposes; otherwise there is no evidence to the effect of Said's invasion at the time.

In the late 1860's the number of the Sudanese families and relatives who settled in Ethiopia to escape Egyptian rule steadily increased. The Egyptians considered these people as deserters and criminals who should be forced to return. The Ethiopian government, however, regarded them as refugees and permitted them to settle in the sparsely populated areas of the frontier districts. However, even if the Ethiopians had wanted to stop them, they had no power to deter them "from going back and forth across the undefined boundary",¹⁴ because it remained very difficult to establish a frontier between the territories of Egyptian-Sudan and Ethiopia. Eventually the rulers of both countries developed

the "habit of supporting malcontents for whom the unsettled borderlands offered easy asylum and a predatory career" which plagued relations between the two countries.¹⁵

In 1865 the Ottoman government ceded the ports of Massawa and Sawkin to the Viceroyalty of Egypt.¹⁶ This event seems to have given a new impetus to Ismael who sought to solve Egypt's financial problem by annexing more territories, opening them up for trade and exploiting their natural resources.¹⁷ He dreamt of extending Egypt to the "the Lake Victoria and Albert Nyanza, including a coast line from Suez to Zanzibar".¹⁸ Thus, following the death of Tewodros in 1868, the Egyptians began a more constant forward policy toward Ethiopia. Munzinger¹⁹ Pasha who, was appointed governor of Massawa in 1871, was an extremely ambitious person who annexed Bogos, fortified it, opened a road from Massawa to Kassala and subsequently extended his authority over the whole Sudanese coast in 1872. In line with the aggressive policy of Ismael, Munzinger ostentatiously paved the way for the immediate conquest of Ethiopia where Yohannes IV had just come to power.²⁰

Apparently Yohannes' reaction against Munzinger's occupation of Bogos was moderate. He reportedly wrote to Ismael Pasha that he might keep the area provided that the Ethiopians were allowed to trade through Massawa without any hinderance. But Ismael never accepted the idea, for it contradicted his grand project of expansion.²¹ Mainly he wanted to control the importation of firearms into Ethiopia through Massawa to weaken and dominate the country.

In 1875, Munzinger in collaboration with Ismael designed an all-out Egyptian attack against Ethiopia in various directions. Decisive battles took place between Ismael's and Yohannes' armies at Gundet and Gura in 1875 and 1876 respectively. Although the Egyptian troops, which included a good number of black Sudanese marksmen, were well armed, well supplied and were mostly led by trained European and American commanders in the service of Khedive Ismael, they were overwhelmingly defeated by the Ethiopians.²² The wars resulted in social displacement, economic exploitation and the political subjugation of most of the predominantly nomadic pastoralist in the lowland regions as the soldiers of both parties marched through their habitat.

After the Egyptian defeats the whole Sudanse frontier and the Egyptian-occupied Bogos and Massawa were at the mercy of the Ethiopians, but Yohannes acted moderately,²³ probably because he wanted to turn his attention to internal political developments. The Egyptian government was also not in a position to make another war, owing to internal economic and political crisis and, above all, the humiliating defeats at Ethiopian hands. The state of no war and no peace therefore existed between the two countries for several years.

Meanwhile, in 1877, the Egyptian government appointed Gordon, a British General as the governor of the Sudan, the first Christian European to hold the post. From the very beginning Gordon was confronted with the legacy of Ismael's expansionist policy, i.e., "an unsettled frontier with Ethiopia," and revolts in different parts of the Sudan, such as Darfur and Bahr-al-Ghazal. Gordon attempted to control the situation by offering compromises to Yohannes, thereby reaching a settlement with Ethiopia, and by making internal administrative reforms in the problem areas of the Sudan.²⁴ Gordon's efforts ended in fiasco, as later developments would reveal. During his period, however, Ethio-Sudanese relations seem to have improved, at least on the State level, because of the smooth exchange of words between him and Yohannes, the two Christian leaders. But, even then, the border people suffered as both sides sought to collect taxes from the peasants of the debatable territories which were often threatened with invasion at a local level.²⁵ As contemporary writer, Wylde commented:

"...I rode all over the Kism Samhar country and along the frontier.... I found that the district was entire chaos and confusion and had never been visited by Egyptian officials, and those in authority, instead of being at their posts, were living in close proximity to Massawa in perfect safety; and the shepherds who form the most numerous portion of the population had been living in a state of terror, and whenever the brigands had required money to spend in debaucheries at Massawa, they had plundered the flocks of the natives and had driven them into Massawa for sale."²⁶

The problem of the frontier inhabitants had undoubtedly increased since 1820 and would grow after the Mahdist rise in the Sudan, particularly during the period of the Khalifa Abdullahi, for the whole Ethio-Sudanese border became a battle ground between Mahdist troops and the Ethiopian soldiers.

The Frontier Problems Between Ethiopia and the Mahdist State (1881-1889)

The socio-political suppression, as well as the economic exploitation of the Sudanese peoples under the Egyptian administration, caused a religious revitalization movement known as Mahdism. In a short period of time it turned out to be a strong and popular political movement which ended the oppressive Egyptian rule in the Sudan and was eventually able to put up a stiff resistance against British imperialism.²⁷

The leader of the movement was Ahmad ibn Abdallah who, in June 1881, declared himself the Mahdi - the divine leader chosen by God according to the sunni Muslim belief. The Mahdia movement took its name from the Mahdi,²⁸ whose followers were called the Mahdists - also known as the Dervishes - and his soldiers were called the Ansars. Most of the Muslim frontier peoples, the

Habab, Beni Amer, Sennar, Assaortas and others, responded favourably to the Mahdist religious appeals, not only because of their opposition to Christianity in the Ethiopian highlands, but also as a protest against the harsh rule of the Christian emperor. The Mahdia also inspired the Muslims of Wallo in the heartland of the Ethiopian empire who created problems for Yohannes's government.²⁹ It is therefore apparent that the birth of the Mahdist movement had far reaching socio-political and economic consequences for the peoples of Ethiopia, the Sudan, Egypt and Britain in general and the frontier inhabitants in particular.

The movement was just about a year old when the British occupied Egypt in 1882 in the name of squelching a nationalist uprising led by Arabi Pasha which jeopardized European lives and loans to Egypt.³⁰ The British thus colonized Egypt, which it ruled indirectly through Egyptian agents. The British Government thus became responsible for all Egyptian-held territories, including the Sudan, Harar, all the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden ports. Britain consequently faced a number of serious problems which were direct effects of the Egyptian administration: the fast-spreading Mahdi revolt, and the unsettled frontier issue between Ethiopian and Egypt.

In the years 1880-1883, the formative period of the Mahdist movement, conditions seem to have been relatively peaceful in the Ethio-Sudanese frontier districts. For instance, the Mahdi sent letters to Khojale Adam of Beni Shangul and Mohammed Himmaidi of Khomosha soliciting support for his cause. Both pledged allegiance to the Mahdi, who made Khojale an *amir*. Initially, the Mahdists were satisfied with the payment of religious taxes, and traditional Bertha institutions remained intact. The new overlords of the border region were more interested in the spread of the Mahdist propaganda than anything else.³¹

In 1883 two Ethiopians - Debbab, the cousin of Yohannes IV, and a certain Demelash, became outlaws for private reasons. Both obtained protection from Mouktar Bey, governor of Massawa, and started plundering and looting the border inhabitants. Incidentally, the behavior of the rebels and the support given to them, nearly brought the Ethiopian army upon the Egyptians and created uneasy feelings.³²

Meanwhile, the Mahdist movement grew so powerful that it overthrew the Egyptian administration in southern and western Sudan by scoring successive victories against the Egyptian forces and advancing towards the eastern portion of the Sudan along the Ethiopian border. The situation filled the British authorities with such panic that they ordered the Egyptians to abandon the Sudan immediately in order to buy time to design a new strategy.

When the British plans for the Egyptian evacuation of the Sudan were thwarted by the Mahdist troops, London promptly sent Admiral Hewett to

Ethiopia to conclude a treaty with Yohannes IV. On June 3, 1884, the Hewett Treaty³³ (also known as The Adwa Treaty) was signed between Great Britain and Ethiopia.³⁴ In the treaty the British promised the Egyptian-occupied frontier territories to Yohannes, free transit under British protection to and from Ethiopia through Massawa for all goods including arms and ammunitions, all the stores and ammunitions of war of the Egyptian army, all differences between Ethiopia and Egypt to be referred to the British Government, the mutual elimination of criminals in the frontier areas and assistance to obtain the appointment of a bishop to Ethiopia. On his part, Yohannes agreed "to facilitate the withdrawal of troops of His Highness the Khedive, from Kassala, Amedib and Sanhit through Ethiopia to Massawa."³⁵

By signing the Hewett Treaty, Yohannes exchanged a weak enemy, Egypt, for two strong ones, Italy and the Mahdist state as events would reveal. In the interest of the British/Egyptian authorities, Yohannes engaged himself in the relief and withdrawal of Egyptian garrisons from the fortified towns along the Ethiopian frontier. The project was mostly taken care of by Ras Alula who involved himself and his troops in the difficult task of safely delivering the garrisons of Amedib, Algeden and Keren on the northern frontier, Girra and Gallabat (Metemma) on the northwest and western frontier. The five stations were the only ones throughout the Egyptian-Sudan which did not fall into the hands of the Mahdists³⁶ by the middle of 1885.

On August 21, 1885, Uthman Diqna, one of the Mahdist generals, took possession of Kassala and declared war on Ras Alula. On September 23, 1885, a bloody battle took place at Kufit in Kassala district between the Mahdist soldiers led by Uthman Diqna's commander, Mustafa Hadal, and the combined Ethio-Egyptian army under Ras Alula. At first the Ethiopian troops were worsted, but in the second round they were able to inflict a heavy loss on the Mahdists and were successful in saving the Egyptian garrisons.³⁷

The Battle of Kufit devastated the economy of the frontier population: soldiers looted, economic life was brought to a standstill, and the insoluble contradictions between Christian and Muslim remained. Many historians have interpreted the strife purely as a religious war between the Muslims and the Christians, but the war equally affected the non-Christians and the non-Muslims of the area in question.

Others contend that the frequent conflicts and frontier problems were derived from "the absence of a defined boundary, the opportunities for raiding which local war-lords on both sides found irresistible, and the coincidence of bellicose rulers in both Ethiopia and the Mahdist Sudan...."³⁸ It could also be argued, however, that even with a defined boundary, there would have been raiding across the frontier for socio-economic and political reasons. For example Wollega

traditions assert that there had always been raids and counter-raids among the Oromo, the Komo and the Nuer along the Ethio-Sudanese border.

We have seen that Yohannes lived up to British expectations by carrying out his obligations toward Egyptian garrisons. We have also seen that his relations with the Madist Sudan were permanently strained and that frontier conflicts were more and more serious to the disadvantage of the border population. But unfortunately, Yohannes's "Christian" friends, the British, did not keep their promises to him. They permitted the Italians to occupy Massawa in 1885 and to encroach on the northern frontier of Ethiopia, eventually advancing into the interior,³⁹ increasing the burden of the frontier inhabitants. The British never showed the slightest honesty to Yohannes. As Wyld wrote:

...England made use of King Johannes as long as he was of any service, and then threw him over to the tender mercies of Italy, who went to Massowah under our auspices with the intention of taking territory that belonged to our ally, and allowed him to destroy and break all the promises England had solemnly made to King Johannes after he had faithfully carried out his part of the agreement.⁴⁰

As already mentioned, some of the border shieks in the Beni Shangul region had acknowledged the regime of the Khalifa who had appointed Khalil all-Kuzani, a Baqqara officer, at the head of a strong Jihadiya force to rule over Beni Shangul which threatened the autonomy of the rulers.⁴¹ Both leaders of Komosha and Beni Shangul bitterly complained against the appointment, but with no concrete results. The Mahdist commanders and their followers engaged themselves in a lucrative business of slave trade, in which the "highlanders" and the "Galla" fetched higher prices than the other dark-skinned inhabitants of the frontier lowlands.

The new commander introduced a new militant Islam and tightened the administration which proved to be harsh. He forbade the drinking of *merissa* (a local bear made of dura) and the smoking and chewing of tobacco leaves. He prohibited some traditional Muslim practices and imposed strict Mahdist rules. He recruited soldiers for the *jihadiya* army and introduced a new taxation system - the *jizy* (indiscriminate poll tax), to finance the army, which amounted to the wholesale plunder of the border inhabitants.⁴² The oppressive rule created resentment and resistance against the new administration for it affected the local socio-political structure. But the Mahdist overlords used the frontier regions as a stepping stone to advance their cause.

It was from the border areas that the Ansars launched attacks into Ethiopia. A series of acute frictions, raids and counter-raids took place between the two enemy forces which damaged the economy of the border lands and subjected the defenceless inhabitants to enslavement. The Ansars invaded western Wollega (winning anti-Shoan elements to their side) under their leader Seleman (Suliman)

and were in full control of the area west of the Didessa River for nearly a year. Traditions confirm that the Ansars pillaged and plundered villages and raped the wives and daughters of the community. They say that the Ansars compelled people to be converted to Islam and forcibly imposed their own culture.⁴³

Informants also relate that Ras Gobana, who was sent by Menilek, mainly organized the local people of Wollega under Moroda of Neqemte and Jote of Quellem, and defeated the Mahdist forces at Gute Dilli in Nedjo. In the engagement against the Ansars, Amuma Chalte, one of the local Oromo soldiers, is said to have sung:

Oromo	English
Maagann Gorba ajeesa	Askaris kills calfs
Kormi Chalte Hora	The bull (strong man) of Chalte Hora
Gaf-gaf torba ajeesa	on some days (occasionally) kills seven. ⁴⁴

This song expresses not only the patriotic performance of the individual, but also indicates the contributions made by the subjugated people to the victory of Gobana and his associates over the Ansars. Moreover, it reveals the bitter hatred of the people against their oppressors and shows that they were ready to exploit any opportune moment to harass their enemies.

Outraged by his defeats in western Wollega, Khalil returned to his harsh rule and exploitation of the local people. At this time he was fully supported from Omdurman, even though trade and cultivation suffered. Moreover, the Mahdist administration became suspicious of the local rulers no longer trusted them, but exploited traditional enmities as checks on their fidelity.⁴⁵

Relations between Ethiopia and the Mahdists became increasingly tense, particularly in northwestern Ethiopia. In 1887 one of the adventurous subordinates of Muhammad Wad Arabab, governor of Metemma, overran Dembea and burnt Mahibere Selassie Monastic Church. Consequently, Teklehaymanot pillaged the district between Gedaref and Metemma. He burnt Metemma, killed the governor, enslaved or killed the prisoners.⁴⁶ Suspected collaborators were severely punished.

The Khalifa promptly undertook the project of reestablishing Metemma and despatched a letter to Yohannes:

"Up to the present time I have ever followed the commandments of our lord the Prophet, who said, avoid the Abyssinians as long as they avoid you,...[this] is the reason why I refrained from fighting you, but...you are the cause of the breaking of peace by your oppression and ill-treatment of the weak Moslems who live near the frontier of your country... you have killed and captured many of them,...given refuge to those who have

deserted the religion,...I have...sent...my army to your frontier to watch your proceedings. If you wish peace... return all captives....both male and female, slaves, old and young, not a soul must be left in your country...if you refuse,... expect nothing but war."⁴⁷

Yohannes did not pay attention to the Khalifa's letter. As a result, the Mahdist troops accelerated raids across the frontier into Ethiopia. The successes in the skirmishes encouraged the Khalifa to avenge the destruction of Metemma. Troops commanded by Abu Anja defeated Teklehaymanot in 1888 and advanced up to Gondar where they were welcomed by Ethiopian Muslims, earlier forced converts of Yohannes. The Mahdists burnt the city, took numerous captives, devastated the countryside and went back to Metemma.⁴⁸ The Khalifa's next letter clearly reveals the measures taken by his soldiers against the local people because of Yohannes' reluctance to embrace Islam or show any sign of cooperation.

"...I have told you that the army of the faithful would occupy your country if you hesitate to obey our orders; but... you have not repented,... therefore our armies invaded your country, killed your men, ruined your churches, burnt your cities, captured your women, made your children orphans, and came back victorious....know that the blood of all your helpless people is in your head, because you are their shepherd...."⁴⁹

Whoever is to receive the blame for the provocation of wars between the countries, it is worthwhile to note that the frontier inhabitants were the ones who suffered from the clashes.

Yohannes organized and consolidated his forces to counter the Mahdist invasion. He warned the Khalifa that he was even prepared to attack Omdurman, the capital. The Khalifa was unmoved by Yohannes's warning. He made himself ready and ordered his army commanders to face the challenge. On March 9, 1889, the Ethiopian army under the personal command of the Emperor attacked the Mahdist soldiers at Metemma and penetrated the enemy's defence.⁵⁰ In the fighting Yohannes was, however, mortally wounded; commanders gathered around him while others continued burning the houses and harassing the Ansars. Shortly after, the king died, and triumph was suddenly changed into defeat. Many of the Ethiopian soldiers were able to get away with the captives and the wealth they plundered. Others were pursued by the Ansars who killed some of them and got a large amount of booty. The Ansars also succeeded in capturing Yohannes's crown and sword. They beheaded the king and sent it to the Khalifa at Omdurman.⁵¹

The result of the battle of Metemma was a disaster for the local people. Like the preceding wars it also obstructed trade and agriculture and made many people homeless and forced them to flee. The soldiers of both parties ravaged and plundered the villages, slaughtered some of the cattle and goats and feasted on the

meat while they took others as war booty. The inhabitants were almost completely impoverished. Moreover, there was a bad harvest in 1889, and the "Great Famine" was severe around Gallabat, Kassala and other areas. The situation weakened the Mahdist position by creating open hostilities because the commanders pressed the peasants to supply the hungry army with grain at the time when they were suffering from severe shortage of food.⁵²

Following the Battle of Metemma the Ethio-Sudanese frontier remained relatively quiet⁵³ in the sense that no grand invasion was undertaken by one or the other party. But the local people continued to suffer from heavy taxation and small-scale periodical raids to capture slaves and plunder to her types of wealth.

Three reasons are given for the existence of relative peace between Ethiopia and the Sudan after Yohannes's death. 1. The enormous loss sustained by the Mahdists (and the Ethiopians) at Metemma. 2. There was some kind of understanding between the Khalifa and Menilek II, the new emperor of Ethiopia. 3. Menilek, unlike his predecessor, regarded Italy more dangerous than the Sudan.⁵⁴ Evidently some sort of rapprochement between the two leaders seems to have decreased open clashes. Our sources, however, indicate that local raids continued unabated.

NOTES

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2. H.G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menilek II Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Oxford, 1975), p. 79.
3. P.M. Holt and M.W. Daly, *The History of the Sudan from the Coming of Islam to the Present Day* (London, 1979) pp. XI-XII.
4. M. Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes: The Challenge of Islam and Reunification of the Christian Empire 1769-1855* (London, 1968) pp. 96-7.
5. R. Hill (ed), *On the Frontier of Islam: Two Manuscripts Concerning the Sudan Under Turco-Egyptian Rule 1822-45* (Oxford, 1970) p.16.
6. Abir, *Ethiopia*., p. XXIII.
7. S. Rubenson *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London ,1976), p. 208.
8. G. Douin, *Histoire du règne du Khédive Isamil*, (Le Caire), III, 1, pp. 37-8 (cited by Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 208-9), See also A.B. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London, 1901), p.7.

9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. A Triulzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy* (Napoli, 1981), pp. 96-7.
12. *Ibid.*, See also Hill, *The Sudan*, pp. 89-103.
13. Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 212-3.
14. *Ibid.*, pp.213-5.
15. *Ibid.*
16. R.A. Caulk "Yohannes IV, the Mahdists, and the Colonial Partition of North-East Africa", *Trans-African Journal of History*, (July 1971), 1,2, p.30.
17. Holt and Daly, *History*, pp. 78-9.
18. Wylde, *'83 to '87 in the Sudan* (London, 1888) p.237.
19. Warner Munzinger was a Swiss scholar and businessman who came to northern Ethiopia and was appointed as "the official consular representative of both France and England at Massawa" and later on became an Egyptian general of Massawa. See Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 23.
20. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.26.
21. Holt and Daly, *History*, p. 79.
22. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p. 23.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
24. Marcus, *Life and Times*, p.80.
25. Holt and Daly, *History*, p. 79.
26. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p. 31.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
28. Zewde Gebre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1975), p.194.
29. Holt and Daly, *History*, p.86.
30. Zewde Gebre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV*, p.194.
31. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.30; Caulk, "Yohannes IV", p.23.

32. Trulzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy*, pp. 144-5.
33. Wylde, '83 to '87, p.337.
34. For the details of the treaty see Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.472.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.35.
37. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.36.
38. Holt, *The Mahdist State*, pp. 169-70; Zewde Gebre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV*, p.177.
39. Holt and Daly *History*, pp. 102-3.
40. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p.38.
41. Zewde Gebre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV*, p.204.
42. W.R. James. *A Crisis in Uduk History, Sudan Notes and Records*, (1968), XLIX, p. 20.
43. Triulzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy*, pp. 145-6.
44. Interview: Ato Kitila Challa, Nedjo, 1979, Ques Daffa Jamo, Iera, 1979. See also Terefe W. Tsadik, "Unification of Ethiopia 1880-1935, Wollega" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (1968) VI, No.1, pp. 80-1.
45. Interview: Grazmatch Woltaji Dagaago, Bodji, 1979.
46. Holt, *The Mahdist State*, p.170; R.A.Caulk, "Yohannes IV", p.29.
47. F.R. Wingate, *Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan* (London, 1968) pp. 332-33. The letter is dated July 1887.
48. R.A. Caulk, "Yohannes IV", p.30.
49. Wingate, *Mahdism*, p.370. This letter is dated March 1888.
50. Holt, *The Mahdist State*, p.174.
51. *Ibid.*, Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, pp. 41-2; Holt and Daly, *History*, p.103.
52. Triulzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy*, p.151.
53. Holt, *The Mahdist State*, p.43.
54. *Ibid.*

PART VI

EPILOGUE

Shiferaw Bekele

The papers in this book were primarily read on anniversary symposia. The first group - i.e. those which dealt with Téwodros - were presented at the symposium held to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the battle of Mäqdäla while the papers related to Yohannes were read on the symposium held to celebrate the centenary of the battle of Mätämma. Lively discussions were held in the course of these two conferences. More than one paper expressly raised the need for a re-examination of views and myths about Téwodros. Perhaps this was the most original aspect of these symposia.

None other than Professor Rubenson, who has done so much to underpin the popular image of Téwodros, rounded off his paper with a call for further research and with the advice that students should be open "if necessary, to discard cherished myths or generally accepted interpretations." Amanuel Sahle took this call further when he pleaded for "demythologizing" Téwodros.

The reactions of the audience when Amanuel read his paper clearly demonstrated that the popular image of Téwodros was a "cherished myth" that even the learned, let alone the public at large, are not prepared to forsake it without a fight. At the other end of the spectrum, passionate feelings were expressed that not much recognition was given to the greatness and heroism of Téwodros. Sägayé was in the forefront of this "school" and he called for an even greater "heroification of heroes". When the savants disagree so much, there is clearly a need for examining the issues all over again.

One should therefore ask whether in the first place there is a myth. A stocktaking of the scholarly literature is a *sine qua non* to address the issue. This concluding essay takes up this task. It covers much more than Téwodros, however. The scholarly writings on Yohannes are also taken into account since he too was part of the same historical process that the former was instrumental in setting off.

* This essay incorporates the lecture (sections II, III, V) which I delivered on the Symposium held to commemorate the Centenary of Mätämma held on 9 March 1989. I am grateful to Professor R. Pankhurst for his comments on the first draft. The comments and encouragement of my two brothers, Solomon and Yared, were very important.

In the transliteration system that we have used, we have retained the spelling of names of authors as they have written them on the title page of their English writings. All others we have transliterated.

When the noted Africanist historian, Professor Ranger, paid a visit to Addis Ababa in 1972, he was not impressed by the achievements in Ethiopian history. He is reported to have declared that it "had fallen far behind the major achievements of the discipline in [the rest of] Africa." Professor Triulzi, who reports this information in 1982, adds that, "few of us were able to disagree then, and even fewer would do so today."¹ I do not want to take issue with this judgement. But on one score it could be said that neither Ranger's nor Triulzi's impressions were well founded. The field of 19th century Ethiopian history has registered considerable progress since the 1960s. Beginning with the appearance of Professor Rubenson's articles, a series of dissertations, articles and monographs were produced by M. Abir, D. Crummey, K. Darkwah, Hussein Ahmed, H. Erlich, R. Pankhurst, Zawde Gabra Selassie and others which considerably advanced our knowledge.² To be sure, these scholarly works exhibited varying qualities. Generally speaking, the focus was on foreign relations with special emphasis on Euro-Ethiopian relations. Some of the finest monographs and articles were written on this theme. Internal affairs, however, were not totally neglected. Some very fine studies (for example, by Crummey, Caulk, Hussein, Stitz) were produced.³ Future generations of historians will draw much from this corpus of material.

- I -

My article in this book, "The State in the Zamana Masafent (1786-1853): An Essay in Reinterpretation", will hopefully raise the question to what extent most of the basic assumptions and generally accepted interpretations regarding the whole range of nineteenth century history were grounded in substantial evidence. The *Zamana Masafent* was the era of the Wārā Séh Māsēfent and not, as hitherto believed, an era of disintegration and of collapse of the State. Contrary to widely held beliefs, it was not an era of independent warlords and of anarchy any more than other periods since the 14th century. It reveals a striking resemblance to the Shogunate of Japan and even more striking similarity with the history of the Mayors of the Palace of the Merovingian Empire.⁴

This new interpretation, has several wide- reaching implications. It calls for a re-examination of the conventional picture of the *Zāmānā Māsafent* as the era "in which trade declined, agriculture stagnated and Ethiopia's civilization regressed."⁵ That, on the contrary, external trade was on the upswing, Abir has adduced considerable evidence to demonstrate.⁶ An interesting examination of agriculture in this period has been attempted by Crummey.⁷ But unfortunately, it does not answer our query because it confines itself to description. Yet, the calculations he makes regarding exports of agricultural produce (honey, wax, cereals) from some of the provinces of the Māsēfent show some increase between the 1830s and 1860⁸ which, if anything, underpins the need for a further reassessment.

Since historians base their assumption of the "decline and regress" of "civilization", on the frequency of warfare and subsequent destruction which is supposed to be higher in this than in many other periods of Ethiopian history, it is important to note that the Téwodrosian era, the first half of the 17th century, not to mention the 16th century, witnessed much more warfare and devastation than the first half of the 19th century.

The new theory of the Mäsfenatē will also lead one to question the view that Téwodros brought about unification of the country. This interpretation again pits us head on with the verdicts of the prominent historians of Téwodros and his times: Rubenson and Crummey not to mention Abir, the appearance of whose book, *The Era of Princes*, was greeted as "an important event".¹⁰

Rubenson captures, in a few words, the whole essence of the significance of the man in Ethiopian history as he and his colleagues saw it:

In Tewodros II, Ethiopia received a ruler of a kind very different from any that she had known for many years or generations. In more than one sense of the word he was a revolutionary. In more than one field of the life of his nation, he was an innovator of no mean proportions.¹¹

One feels overwhelmed in the face of such extraordinary evaluations coming from none other Rubenson whose empiricism is so well-known. We are also persuaded that on top of these "revolutionary" exploits should be placed the unification of the country which he achieved so dramatically. Then come restoration of the Solomonic monarchy, reforms in military organization, land reform and a number of activities (like making of mortars in the country, boat making, the attempt to "abolish slavery and the slave trade", the use of Amharic for official purposes, etc.) which together constituted the elements that made Téwodros such an extraordinary "revolutionary", "reformer" and "modernizer". All these views are presented to us afresh in this book by Professor Pankhurst in his essay "Téwodros as an Innovator". In addition to bringing data together from various sources, his essay has the virtue of recapitulating this universally held picture of the career of Téwodros.

The view that Téwodros was a unifier is a fairly old one. Not to mention travellers like Plowden who waxed lyrical on this position and on the anti-feudalism of their hero,¹² one can trace it to the writings of Ethiopia's intellectuals of the first few decades of the 20th century. Gäbrä Heywät Baykädāñ, for example, singles out unification as the most important contribution of this great leader in his article published in 1912.¹³ For Heruy Wäldä Sellasé, another prominent early 20th century scholar-cum-public figure, it was the sole but decisive work of this self-made monarch.¹⁴ In his general history, published back in 1944, Täklä Sadiq Mäkuriya, another historian of the traditional school, and a public figure to boot, also follows the same line of interpretation.¹⁵

Curiously enough, however, contemporary Ethiopian sources, particularly chronicles, do not seem to have been impressed with this aspect of Téwodros's accession to power. Both Zänäb and Wäldä Maryam, as well as the anonymous chronicler, tended to see him as an overthrewer of the Wära Séh state which they preferred to paint as a decadent one. Judging from his published letters, even Téwodros himself did not claim that he was a reunifier of Ethiopia. All he said was that he overthrew the Wära Séh because they were illegitimate and corrupt.¹⁶

Ašmé, a noted and immensely respected historian of the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not belong to the chronicle school of historiography. He wrote his history on the basis of research and he put a considerable dosage of analysis into his writing. Moreover, he himself was in a way a contemporary of Téwodros because he was born in the later *Zämänä Mäsafent*. In his eyes, too, Téwodros was a usurper of the Solomonic throne and an overthrewer of the Wära Séh Mäsafent.¹⁷ In other words, Ašmé as much as the contemporary chroniclers - not to mention Téwodros himself - saw in Téwodros a restorer of the monarchy rather than anything else.

Notwithstanding this fact, historians place "reunification" on top of his achievements. It is made out to be one of the very important feats that made him a man "ahead of his time", though nobody has bothered to substantiate this claim. Yet, all what Téwodros did was to add Šäwa to the territorial extent of the Mäsafent - an achievement, no doubt, but, hardly one that qualifies him as a great unifier.

To argue that the present-day prevalent interpretation should have to be revised may appear excessive pedantry. But it cannot be downplayed either because it is ultimately "reunification" that was put up as an explanation for his tragic downfall: regional lords who constituted the core centrifugal forces opposed his noble goal of reunification. In the process, the Church, which was no less reactionary and backward, joined them. And so they launched a series of provincial rebellions which eventually brought about his undoing. The prominent historians - Rubenson, Abir, Täklä Šadiq Mäkuriya - agree on this explanation.¹⁸ Even Crummey, who grapples with the sources to identify other more fundamental causes that were internal to the Téwodrosian mode of governance, squarely falls into the same theory.¹⁹

This widely accepted interpretation which enjoys the status of a truism is based on the premise that there was, in the words of the noted scholar, Margery Perham, "a permanent tension" between the monarchy and the nobility whose inherent and permanent trait was a centrifugal tendency.²⁰ Much of the political conflicts in the history of the Solomonic state were ascribed to these regional lords who always tugged away from the monarchy which was ceaselessly engaged in safeguarding the central institutions of the State.

In an article to be published elsewhere I have questioned this paradigm and have argued for an alternative approach which tries to enquire into the dynamics of factional politics of the royal courts which quite often led to armed confrontation²¹. I contend that there were structural elements which bound governors or regional lords with the centre. These were the central institutions of the State, the system of military organization and the basic tenets of the national ideology. For this reason, centrifugal tendencies would not be in the best self-interests of this social collectivity. Its interests were best served by approximating to the centre as much as they could. This hypothesis does not include, of course, the chiefly circles of peripheral peoples whose interests tended to make them as much centrifugal as centripetal depending on their position in the power structure of the State system.

This hypothesis is supported in a backhanded way by the fact that Téwodros was not the first to think of restoration, either. As early as the second decade of the 19th century Sahlä Sellasé had taken on the title of *negus*. When in 1830, a pretender unsuccessfully claimed that he was the Téwodros of the Books²², it could be surmised that the society was calling for one. In the next two decades, Webé developed the ambition to mount the throne. Webé himself and other lords like Subagadis, not to mention Ali II, at one time or another, called themselves in writing *negus*.²³ All this goes to show that the idea of restoring the monarchy was floating in the society at least among the higher reaches well before Kassa put the crown on himself.

Therefore, the core problem revolved, in as far as the nobility of the Christian state were concerned, around the nature of the struggle for power and the identification of the self-interests of the power elite. Most, if not all, of their armed politics were directed to the centre, to have a place in it and if possible to dominate it. These characteristics come out quite forcefully following the decline of the power of Téwodros in the early '60s when the struggle was for succession than for separatism or regionalism.²⁴

All this adds to the conclusion that one has to look for other explanations for the tragic failure of Téwodros. Perhaps, it would open a more fruitful avenue for research to reorient our analytical tools towards structural factors rather than focusing as heretofore on reunification and the opposition to it.

What then were the structural implications of restoring the monarchy? What did it involve in the sphere of institution building? Which of the old central institutions of the Gonderine kingdom were reconstituted and which new ones were created? How much destruction of the institutions of the Mäsfenat was required by the restoration of the monarchy? These are all interrelated questions, it is true, but they reflect various dimensions of the structural *problématique* of the restoration so dramatically declared by Téwodros. That historians have not so

far, to my knowledge, come to grips with these questions could possibly be due to the nature of the sources. They are not rich enough to enable them to write the kind of structural history that has, for example, been developed for the Shogunate of Japan, the Meiji Restoration or the Mayors of the Palace or the founding of the Carolingian Empire. The need for unearthing new information cannot be over-emphasized.

✓ Structures and their mode of functioning constitute one of the key elements to understand why political events transpired the way they did. Without a knowledge of all the institutions (and their mechanics) of democratic, capitalist states, one would be at a total loss to figure out why political parties and politicians behave in the manner they do. This is an all too obvious fact but there is merit in emphasising it for the simple reason that not a few Ethiopicist historians always attempt to explain events without comprehending the way the political and social system functioned.

We will therefore first proceed to a structural analysis of the central institutions of the state system. The analysis, however, suffers from a static characteristic which goes against the grain of conventional historical research. Conventions should however be discarded in the face of such a glaring absence of a knowledge of the workings of the system. This task could only be done by freeing time and dissecting institutions and the mode of their functioning.

- II -

The question of central institutions acquires importance when it is realized that the monarchy could not function without them. Kingship had been the nodal point at which the subsidiary parts originated. These complementary organs are usually referred to as central institutions. What were these institutions which surrounded the throne? As yet no in-depth study has been done on this topic.

It would be outside the scope of this essay to attempt a full treatment of the institution of kingship²⁵. Suffice it to lay down the general outlines against which to discuss the careers of Téwodros and Yohannes.

Central institutions are several. The royal court *qua* court is perhaps the first and most pivotal of them. It contained a number of offices which enabled the king to carry out all his functions. Some of the offices - *aqabé sā'at*, *ṣāhafé te'zaz*, *azaz*, *afā negus* - played crucial roles at the national level which gave them a pride of place in national politics.²⁶

Then came the governors as a group. They too constituted an intrinsic part of the central institutions because they had double roles - provincial governor and royal counsellor.²⁷ They were required to maintain residence at or near the royal

court where they would stay for a part of the year. During this stay, they were obliged to take part not only in royal councils, but also to sit on royal tribunals and to participate in other activities of the king. Very often, they held court offices in addition to their provincial charges.

The offices of the *abun*, the *eṣṣāgē* and the royal *liqā kahnat* also constituted important elements of the central institutions. These were more or less permanent ones while some offices - like those of *etegē* and *ras bitwādād* - underwent changing fortunes, at times playing coordinating roles and at other times reduced to secondary positions.²⁸ But they were always an organic part of the royal court.

The institution of royal council was made up of these officers perhaps with the exception of the *etegē* and the two clerical dignitaries.²⁹ It was presided over by the king. Major issues - like big rebellions - were normally discussed on it. The decision-making process looks strange when viewed from the perspective of the present. Procedurally, the lords who attended a particular council would all give their opinion, starting from the lowest official and going up one by one to the highest. The last to speak was the king whose word was final. Thus, because there was no voting, the king would apparently weigh the various opinions and would accordingly make a decision.³⁰ Moreover, the very procedure itself - everyone giving his opinion and the order going from the lowest to the highest official - would at least in principle enable a capable king to pass decisions based on consensus.

This brief description brings out the ideal principles of this institution. How exactly it operated in real life remains to be found out by future research. The very description, nevertheless, indicates that it was one of the key institutions of the State because it would enable the king to maximize support for a particular line of action and to mobilize as many of the lords as possible for a specific position. Conversely, it would give all the lords who surrounded the throne and all the principal governors a platform to air their views and, above all else, to participate in the decision-making process. It would also make governors and other members of the nobility an intrinsic part of the centre. To be sure, the monarchy was believed to have absolute authority. But the royal council was not only a very important check, at least on this absolutism, but also a mechanism that enabled the *mākwānent* to partake of some of the powers. Hence, it was a truly central, coordinating and key institution. Yet, scholars have on the whole ignored it or at the best given it a passing mention.

The institution of royal tribunal was still another of the central organs of the State on which the king exercised his judiciary functions.³¹ Like all the others, we do not know its history, and mode of functioning through time. It can however be said that this tribunal was presided over by the king himself. He was flanked by the principal courtiers and governors as well as by the royal judges (called *azažoč* and *liqawent* in Gonderine times and *afā negus* in late 19th and 20th

centuries). Normally, the plaintiff and the accused helped by their counsel would be given the floor. Witnesses would follow. Then the dignitaries would be asked one by one to stand up and give their judgement. It was only at the end that the king uttered his final judgement. This judgement usually took into account the opinions of the lords.³²

This institution served a major political purpose. Not only were major individual criminal and civil cases brought before it, but more importantly it investigated cases of *lèse-majesté* (rebellions, conspiracies and other breaches of duty on the part of the principal officers of the state). It was in the latter case that the full significance of the tribunal as a political organ came out. It gave a forum to the king to rally opinion and to mobilise support against rebels, conspirators and others who defied his authority. If capable, he could use this platform to put his case in the best of lights. On the other hand, the institution would also enable the defendants to plead for justice and for mercy. Depending on their connections and lobbying in court circles, they could make a successful plea for mercy and for reinstatement.

This description is again a description of the institution as it is supposed to work ideally. Its actual vicissitudes in history remain to be reconstructed. If however, it operated as it was supposed to, there would be no room for arbitrary justice. Any rebel - big or small - would be given a "fair trial" - fair, that is, within the context of the system - on which he would argue out his case. One may not have to belabour the obvious implications of a mode of operation such as this.³³

There were also other central institutions like Amba Wähni. Amba Wähni was the royal prison of the Gondarine kingdom.

Together, these institutions gave the State remarkable strength and resilience. This resilience was strengthened by another characteristic of the State. Though the king was regarded as absolute and all his people - regardless of class and sex - as his subjects, there nevertheless existed considerable delegation of authority to provincial governors.³⁴ Provinces enjoyed tremendous internal autonomy. While being subjects to the king in some ways, governors were an intrinsic part of the monarchy and at the same time rulers who exercised considerable authority in their own provinces. This decentralization was an important factor that further contributed to the endurance of the State.

Yet, scholars have always been militant advocates of centralization. In fact, they go to the extent of counterpoising the monarchy with the *mākwānant*, the former seen as persistently fighting to strengthen the central institutions while the latter were equally stubbornly warring to strengthen their regional powers. Nowadays, this paradigm is placed at the heart of the political history of the entire range of Ethiopian history from Yekunno Amlak to Tāfāri Mākonnen. There is unanimity among historians who have commented on it.³⁵

When all the *gurus* so devoutly worship at the temple of centralism, it would seem blasphemous to raise questions against it. Nevertheless, question we must. Even in a capitalist setting (with all the infrastructure), the tendency has all along been towards increasing decentralization rather than the other way around. How then can one expect centralization to be workable and desirable in a pre-capitalist country like Ethiopia without any of the attendant infrastructures?

Centralization did not by any means have a positive correlation with a strong monarchy. Without it, there could be a powerful state. Examples are not difficult to find. The relatively well documented reigns of Yohannes and Menilek are just two among many cases in point. These monarchs ruled over a state that looked more like "a loose confederation of regional princedoms".³⁶ The central institutions were the adhesive forces of this structure.

One of the principal consequences of the final downfall of the monarchy in 1784 was the dismantling of most of the central institutions and the change in the positions of some of them. Most notable among these was the office of *ras bitwädäd* which had moved from the position of principal governor and courtier at the beginning of the 18th century to that of suzerain of all provincial rulers late in the second half of the same century. The institution of governor also underwent a transmutation from the position of an appointed official to that of a hereditary ruler. Moreover, the royal court with its accompanying institutions completely collapsed.

Restoring the monarchy would, therefore, involve demoting the *ras bitwädäd* and reconstituting the other without which the monarchy could not function. The question here is what did Téwodros do to restore them? Scholars who have written so far on this subject have confined themselves to general statements of "unification" and "restoration" rather than to showing the details of institution-building and restructuring that the restoration called for. This critique applies to those who wrote on Yohannes as well because he too was involved in the same task of imperial reconstruction.

- III -

Even a brief description of institutions such as this one would not be complete unless account is taken of the top men and women who ran them. The best term for this social collectivity was *mäkwanent*, originally the plural form of *mäkonnen*. *Mäkonnen* meant a governor and judge. Conceptually speaking, therefore, the ruling class was a class of governors. The most difficult problem would perhaps be identification of their self-interests. Yet, identifying self-interest is a prerequisite because it would enable us to know the manner in which they try to

maximize it which in turn opens the way to "the invisible hand" that makes them tick as a group.³⁷

Property they had which was in the form of livestock, agricultural produce, money and above all land.

To say that they owned land would be to fly in the face of received wisdom. We are told that it was the peasant who owned land. "The people of Ethiopia... seem to have known only one form of land tenure: clan or lineage ownership"³⁸ which was called *rest*:

The *rest* system gave to the peasant the right to own in perpetuity through his lineage and descent group the imperishable land. The *gult* system, on the other hand, gave to the ruling classes the right to take from the peasant only portions of the grains which came out of the soil and some of the domestic animals that grazed on the fields. *Rest* rights were permanent, *gult* rights, even when intended to be permanent, were temporary and their enjoyment precarious. The temporariness and uncertainty of *gult* rights became a perennial source of political instability.³⁹

This is a very good summary of the theory of land tenure.

That it was *gult* that was a mechanism of surplus extraction for the ruling class meant that "Ethiopian political systems were not based on the ownership of the means of production but on the right of appropriation of portions of the peasant produce. Hereditary ruling families could not evolve."⁴⁰ This paradigm is made the basis of much of the writings of Crummey, Hoben, Mantel-Niecko and numerous other scholars.⁴¹ It has been used as a theory to explain the interests and characteristics of the *mākwānt* class as well as the inner logic of the State.

For all its plausibility and elegance, this theory has yet to take cognizance of additional hard facts on the nature of property relationships of the ruling classes especially as it affected land.

Data from the Menilek period clearly show that the ruling class did own as *rest* extensive *gašas* of land.⁴² The fragmentary evidence found in the *Liber Axumae* which indicates that the ruling class owned large estates as *rest* even before the 16th century suggests the possibility that what we see in the Menilek era was not a new introduction.⁴³ Many references to ownership of extensive amounts of *rest* lands in the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the Amhara provinces which are found in the marginalia of several manuscripts housed in the British Library and elsewhere, strongly bear out this statement.⁴⁴ Recent findings for the same period and region provide additional data.⁴⁵ Thus it could be hypothesized that the nobility owned extensive amounts of land as *rest* from as far back as the era

of the Early Solomonic. The earlier ages are so dark that they have to be left with a question mark.

All this calls for a revision of the theory as outlined above. A further enquiry should focus on the meaning of *rest*. This term was primarily used for an inheritable property with the emphasis on inheritableness. Such land could also be transmitted in other ways - mortgage, sales, etc. But the term *rest* was more often applied to land than to other forms of property. Thus, it meant ownership of land permanently.⁴⁶ The problem with it is that there was another layer of ownership right over the land - i.e. that of the king or the State. He had the right to abrogate *rest* rights because all land ultimately belonged to him.⁴⁷

Private ownership of land was not the sole form of wealth in land. There were also estates attached to offices. These estates were widely called *gult*. The concept of *gult* basically stood for the lowest administrative unit. Using it in reference to estates attached to offices would lead to confusion. Moreover, the division of the system into two mutually exclusive forms - *rest* and *gult* - is an oversimplification that does not reflect all the complexity of the reality.⁴⁸

In a pre-capitalist society, such as Ethiopia, what makes a class a ruling class was not only its property. Property must be bolstered by political power. Influence and a say in the affairs of the society emanate from office and not from a mere accumulation of land *per se*. Titles would not be regarded with much respect unless they were given with office. In any case, their etymology clearly indicates that titles denoted office and rank rather than being a mere appellation of dignity and honour.⁴⁹

That patron-client relationship is the central mode of relationship in the social and political structure has long been stated by anthropologists though its detailed mechanics remain to be worked out.⁵⁰ An important indicator of social status was the number of retainers that a lord had under his command.⁵¹ Prestige stemmed from the fact that the larger the number of retainers one had, the bigger would be one's political clout. A retainer force was at the same time a military force - in fact, the most reliable force.

Only a big office - mostly governorship of a large and fertile province - would offer a lord the resources to give out largesse in the form of land and agricultural produce to an increasing number of retainers. This factor further reinforces the argument that office was central to the aspirations and success of the elite. Or put another way, office was the instrument for optimal maximization of self-interests.

Therefore, ultimately office would be a decisive factor in the formation and continuity of the ruling class. Hence, they would engage in fierce factional politicking within the Court with the ultimate objective of seizing or retaining important offices which were expressed in the intense intrigues over *šum-šer*. The

losing or threatened factions and/or individuals would resort to armed opposition (rebellions and/or *šiftnāt*) as a last recourse to retain what they had or to get back what they had lost. Frustrated ambitions would also fall back on the same course of action to realize the fulfillment of their dreams.⁵²

It could therefore be hypothesized that office was a key element in the country's political crises. The kings would have to satisfy these demands to the extent possible by rallying the support of, and by involving in the decision making process, the larger segment of the *mākwānēt*. This could be done by ensuring the effective functioning of the central institutions, the most important of which was the holding of councils and tribunals regularly. This presupposes, of course, the existence of powerful governors who enjoyed considerable internal autonomy in their domains.

The question is therefore whether or not historians have tried to examine the policies of Téwodros in light of these structural and social constraints.

- IV -

Gäbrä Heywät Baykādañ, Heruy Wäldä Selasé and Mahtämä Sellasé Wäldä Mäsqal transmit to us an elliptical, yet tantalizing tradition. Mahtämä Sellasé published *Zekrā Nāgār* in 1946 E.C. while Gäbrä Heywät's article appeared in print in 1912 and Heruy's biographical dictionary in 1915 E.C. Internal evidence suggests that Mahtämä Sellasé had not seen Gäbrä Heywät's article. We will listen to Mahtämä Sellasé first and then to Gäbrä Heywät because while the former attempts to give a perspective to the tradition, the latter focuses on the consequences of the tradition. As Mahtämä Sellasé tells us:

የኢትዮጵያ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ከጥንት ጀምሮ ሲያያዝ በመጣው ልግድ እስከ
ራስ የግዕረግ ስም የጊሰጠው ስለቀለብ ደመወዝ እያለበ አገር
ለጊያስገዛቸው ብቻ ነው። ... አንድን አገር በምስለኔነት ሳይሆን በግዛት
ሳንድ ሹም መስጠት ለመንግሥት ያመት ገብር ግናቸውንም ዓይነት
ጥቅም ሆኖ እያስወጣ በሱ ውስጥ ያለውን ጥፍራና ሉሌ እንጂ
ያስተዳድርበት መፍቀድ ግለት ነው።*

,53

Like many generalizations, this one too suffers from as many exceptions. Titles were, for instance, given in the Gondärine kingdom without a concomitant governorship, especially in the 1770s. In the era of Zäwditu-Täfäri, the same thing was done. A more detailed examination of the sources will possibly bring out

* Translations of Amharic quotations are given in the notes.

cases of this kind. Nevertheless, Mahtämä Sellasé's thesis still holds water because it was the principle which was supposed to govern all investitures. He then proceeds to comment that Yohannes and Menlick were faithful to it while

ዐፂ ቴዎድሮስ አገር በጆ ብለው በቀለብና በደመወዝ ብቻ የግዕረግ ስጦታ ይሰጡ ነበር ይባላል።

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Heruy was equally laconic:

[ቴዎድሮስ] አገር በጆ ብለው መሀንን ተንጥ ወታደሩንም በደመወዝ አሳደሩት።

55

The perspective given to us by Mahtämä Sellasé helps us to understand better the very meaning of " አገር በጆ " [lit. the country would be in my hands - i.e. I will personally govern the country]. It indeed sounds like a very loaded tenet with fundamental repercussions on the state system - administrative and military structures - and on the ruling class. Mahtämä Sellasé does not inform us on the consequences of this programme, and Heruy does not consider it when he tries to explain the fall of the emperor. It was Gäbrä Heywät who gives it a pride of place in his explanation of the downfall of Kassa, the Qwarāña:

ያፈረኝ ንጉሥ ተበግጥለው የነበሩትን ያበሻን መንግሥት ክፍሎች በሰላ ጥራደው ተጥቅሞ አዋደደ። ሕዝቡንም ከካህናትና ከሹጾች ተምቦ አርነት ሊያወጣ አገር በጆ ብሎ አወጀ። ትምህርትንም ሊከፍት ተከራከረ። አንባቢ ሆይ በዚህ ጥረት ምን ተጠቀመ ይመስለሃል። በመላው ህዝብ በካህናትና በሹጾች ተመክሮ ተነሳበት አሳብደውም። በመጨረሻም ለባዕድ አሳልፎ ሰጠው በገዛ እጅም ጥተ።

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Thus, prominent Ethiopian scholars (of the traditional as well as modern schools) fully concur in the centrality of the policy of " አገር በጆ " in Téwodros's programme of imperial reconstruction. Gäbrä Heywät goes even further and puts it up as the fundamental cause for the emperor's failure in all its aspects.

Did the trained son, who has grappled with this problem, and European historians take this factor into account? The one scholar, Rubenson saw it in terms of unification. For him, the unification of the country could be ensured if only policies were pursued to consolidate it. "Tewodros was clearly aware that many governmental and administrative reforms were necessary in order to give Ethiopia unity, peace and order."⁵⁷ Very much out of character, Rubenson does

not document this bold statement, and again very much out of character, his colleagues have not taken him to task on this methodological question. It was simply taken for granted.

Be that as it may, the top item on the list of these reforms was the need to break the feudal pattern of government in which provinces and districts belonged almost by hereditary right to certain individuals and families, who taxed their subjects at their own discretion, paid an often purely nominal tribute - and sometimes none at all - to the central authority and used the rest for their private households and armies.⁵⁸

This structure had been put to advantage in the political struggles of the *Zāmānā Māsafent* for aggrandizement of territories. Téwodros decided to restructure the whole system by declaring that "governors and judges should be his personal salaried appointees and that all military forces should be integrated into a national army under his command. This army should be properly organised and disciplined, and wages or allowances should take the place of indiscriminate pillaging".⁵⁹

Thus, Téwodros had a radical policy on provincial governors which led to other equally radical reforms like the formation of a new army. At this point, it is better to focus on this policy and put off for some time an examination of the famous question of military reorganization.

What did Téwodros actually do in order to implement this policy? Neither Rubenson nor Crummey nor Täklä Şadiq truly address this query. Thus, one has to fall back on fragmentary evidence to reconstruct at least the outline. Zänāb and Wäldä Maryam, the two contemporary chroniclers, write that Téwodros appointed *meslānēs* for Dāmbeya, Wadla, Dālanta, Dawent and Tegré⁶⁰ at the very outset of his reign. From another source, it could be gathered that *Ras Engeda* was appointed not as a governor but as a *meslāné*.⁶¹ Šāwa too was placed under a *meslāné*.⁶² These were very important provinces. One can therefore assume that Téwodros abolished the system of placing governors over provinces and put in their place his *endārasēs*. There is a big difference between these two offices.

The functions and multiple roles of a governor are well-known. It is those of a *meslāné* which need to be defined in order to understand the full meaning of this platform. There are hierarchies of this office because basically it meant proxy or agent or deputy.⁶³ But a *meslāné* was not a stand-in for any role. He was meant to surrogate for administrative functions over given territorial units. The other term that was alternatively used was *endārasé*.⁶⁴ From the emperor and the *etegé* all the way down to the *mālkāña/gultāña*, the institution of *meslāné* was used to help them run their provinces/*gults*/estates in their absence.

As a substitute, a *meslāné* did not exercise all the powers of a governor. It was on rare occasions that he commanded the provincial army. In principle, he was not obliged, if he was a royal *meslāné*, to counsel the king, to sit on the imperial tribunal and his court protocol was accordingly much lower than those of governor. He had less authority than a governor in his province. For instance, he could not issue *awajs* on land or other administrative matters without the express permission, and in the name of, the overlord for whom he deputized. All this was expressed in the tradition that he was not allowed to have *nāgarit* beaten whereas actual governors were allowed to do so.

The *meslāné's* revenue was normally smaller than that of a governor. With regard to tribute that he collected from the provinces whereas in the case of the *meslāné*, the entire revenue went to the governor or to the king, i.e. to his master for whom he deputized. Consequently, he would have a much smaller following or retainer force. It was very difficult, due to these structural factors, for a *meslāné* to grow into a powerful political figure in his own right in the royal court.

Hence, it follows that the so-called "governors" of the Téwodrosian state were in actual fact made his deputies rather than governors who stood in their own right as commanders and political figures. Thus, the policy of "ለገር በጅ" could only mean a policy of abolishing the office of governor. The question inevitably follows whether this was a right policy.

In any case, Téwodros's policy seems to have been misunderstood by commentators. Rubenson talks in terms of governors. Crummey tells us that Téwodros's "first appointments were very conservative" because he appointed as "governor" Imam Libān for Wällo, Tādla Gwalu for Gojjam, first Araya and a little later Sebhat for Tegray and Haylā Mika'él for Šāwa.⁶⁵ All these men, to be sure, belonged to the regional ruling houses. To this extent, it could be said that their appointment was "conservative". What, however, is overlooked is the fact that these men were not given titles and powers that went with their provinces. In fact, some - like Haylā Mika'el - were given much lower titles than their predecessors bore.⁶⁶ What is worse, they were made Téwodros's *meslānés* rather than governors.

Téwodros's policy therefore gave rise to several implications. Firstly, it meant, at least in theory, that the sole governor of the country was Téwodros himself. In other words, excessive centralization. Secondly, it brought to the fore the question of the legitimacy of Téwodros himself. A man whose social background was viewed as at best as dubious and at worst as downright lowly, proposed to reduce the proud ruling houses to his mere agents or deputies. But, their pride was not empty as they had intimate contact with local military and power structures. Thirdly, the policy had a bearing on the strength of the national army.

Thus, reducing governors to *meslānēs* meant complete centralization in the person of the king. Even if this was not done, a mere restoration of the monarchy entailed reduction in the powers of the regional houses. A king in the Ethiopian state was an absolute sovereign and all others - including the top *māsafent* and the *mākwānent* - were his subjects just as much as the peasant.⁶⁷ Even if this was more a theoretical than an actual statement of the prerogative of kingship, it nevertheless stood in sharp contrast, for example, to the feudal kingdoms of Europe where the king was a mere *primus inter pares* among his great barons.

It was in the era of the Wārā Séh that the regional lords became the peers of their suzerains. The Wārā Séh were only *primus inter pares* among their vassal lords.⁶⁸ Now Téwodros was proposing to bring them down not to the level of governors but even further down to that of *meslānēs*.

As I have endeavoured to contend in section II above, this kind of excessive centralization was neither feasible nor desirable. The State could do much better without it than with it. This hypothesis was fully demonstrated in the reigns of Yohannes and Menilek.⁶⁹

Excessive centralization meant that none of the consultative central institutions - i.e. royal councils and imperial tribunals - could be restored. Though there are references to big councils and tribunals in the sources, none of these functioned as consultative and participatory bodies. They were rather called to serve as platforms for one or another declaration by Téwodros himself. In other words, they were not reconstituted as viable, permanent institutions. In short, centralization meant tyranny. And tyrant Téwodros indeed was.

Rubenson, Crummey, Abir, Täklä Şadiq and all others who wrote on Téwodros give him a lot of credit for his centralization drives. Crummey's verdict very well reflects their opinions:

In comparison to his opponents, Tewodros represented a much more progressive position... Although it is only for the northerners that we have any substantial material, there is no reason to suppose that any of the rebels represented anything other than the essentially reactionary response of provincialism to the centralising ambitions of the Emperor,⁷⁰ or that any of them could remotely rival him in terms of personal gifts.

And yet Crummey himself gives us another judgement in the same paper which is worth quoting at some length:

Without knowing much about the government and administration of Tewodros than we now know, it is impossible to make any final judgement about the degree of his political failure. His violence and his inability to delegate authority clearly were major factors, particularly so in light of the

activities of Tewodros's successors. Although Yohannes IV, Menilek II, and Hayla Sellase I had strikingly different personalities, each enjoyed much success in dealing with the regional nobility and in moving toward a centralized government. The example of Yohannes is most instructive, for he is closest in time to Tewodros. The former's essentially federalist approach was successful, and he became the first emperor in modern times to rule the whole of the country as it then was, and in the face of significant political rivals. Both Menilek of Šawa and Ras Adal (later Negus Takla Haymanot) of Gojjam were formidable rivals by any standard, yet Yohannes brought them under his sway by granting them a certain autonomy. The reign of Yohannes was therefore freer of fundamentally disruptive internal conflict than that of Tewodros.⁷¹

Therefore, Téwodros seems to have committed a major policy error at the very outset of his career by declaring " አገር ስጧ " , by reducing provincial governors to the status of *meslānēs* and by failing to reconstitute the consultative central institutions. This ill-conceived policy intensified the problem of legitimacy which was one of his fundamental problems. The subsequent policies further aggravated the matter which in the end consumed him and the hapless people of Ethiopia.

- V -

The term "federalist" that Crummey uses for the policies of Yohannes is rather anachronistic and should be discarded. We should examine the matter in its light of the analysis of institutions that surrounded the monarchy as was done above in a rather abstract fashion. One way to approach this problem would be via a study of the men who surrounded Téwodros and Yohannes.

Without a full knowledge of these men it would be impossible to say much about the two rulers. Their principal retainers would also represent institutions⁷²; and their careers could reflect the functioning of the latter. Hence, the importance of a social history along this line. And yet, there is practically nothing written on this subject which further reinforces the point of this essay: the image of the two monarchs, particularly of Téwodros - is based on a very incomplete knowledge of their lives and times.

Téwodros had created over ten *rases*.⁷³ Traditionally, when a person was created a *ras* it meant that he was given a large province to govern. In this case, however, we do not see any of Téwodros's *rases* being governors of large domains. On the basis of external sources, Ras Engeda is said to have been appointed governor. An Ethiopian source, however, informs us that he was for instance made only a *meslāné* of Gojjam.⁷⁴ Some of the *rases* - like *Rases Šāga*, *Adalu*,

Barehu, - were mere court officials!⁷⁵ To make a *ras* a court official, is indeed a change.

Ras Baryaw Paulos is invariably referred to, particularly in the foreign sources, as a "governor" of Tegray. The available Ethiopian documents do not clearly indicate whether or not he was a *meslāné* or a *gāzi*.⁷⁵ On the other hand we find *Ras* Kidanā Maryam no more than a commandant of the Māqdāla garrison.⁷⁶

The title of *Bitwādād* seems to have been subject to inflation in the reign of Téwodros⁷⁷. No less than six *Bitwādāds* can be identified in the last years of his reign. None of them was a governor of a province. They were rather Téwodros's courtiers - occupying not-so-high positions. The same statement also applies to the *dājazmačes* and *fitawraris*.⁷⁸

This fully confirms the tradition passed on to us by Gäbrä Heywät, Heruy and Mahtāmā Sellasié that Téwodros conferred titles on his followers without governorships. None of them represented a major central institution. A more thorough search for new documents has to be undertaken, but on the basis of those available to date we do not see Téwodros regularly holding royal councils. In other words, the key central institutions - royal councils and the office of the governor - were not reconstituted by him, which seems to be a major failure.

In any case, the scholars who have written so far do not at all enlighten us on the question of Téwodros as a builder of institutions. Nor do they have much to tell us on the institution of the royal tribunal. The accounts of Zānāb and Wāldā Maryam show that Téwodros executed many an important rebel and his followers - who were sometimes counted in hundreds - without giving them a trial before a tribunal⁷⁹ on which principal courtiers and governors sat and on which the written code (the *Fetha Nagast*) and customary law were drawn upon. The picture that comes out from the accounts of his own chronicler and of the others is of an out-and-out tyrant who decided on capital punishment of thousands of people without any "due process of the law."⁸⁰

Neither Yohannes nor Menilek could be regarded as "tyrants" in this regard because they acted, more often than not, through the institutions of the royal tribunal and council.⁸¹ Most of the *rases* and *dājazmačes* and other titled lords of Yohannes were given governorships along with their entitlement. They were given considerable internal autonomy - judiciary, command of an army, tribute collection, etc.

When one talks of internal autonomy, scholars focus on Menilek and Adal-Täklä-Haymanot. And they argue that Yohannes's policy on these two lords and provinces was a "federalist" approach. This was true, though it should be underlined that Yohannes in this regard followed in the footsteps of the Wārā Séh

Mäsfenat and used the same structural relationships. What is overlooked is his policy towards the other governors whom he himself created.

The career of Alula has been relatively better-studied.⁸² One could see that what Yohannes did was to restore the office of the governor-cum-counsellor. Alula was also given the office of *Türk Baša* - a military-cum-court office - which indicates that Yohannes reconstructed the old structure: some governors at the same time being court officials.⁸³ This institutional arrangement had disappeared in the last quarter of the 18th century during the emergence of the *Wärä Séh* Masfenate.

A study of the lives of other *rases* - Araya Sellasé (Yohannes's own son), Araya Demsu, Gäbrä Mädhén Haylä Maryam, Haylä Maryam Gugsä, Mika'él Ali, Baryaw Pawlos, Baryaw Gäbrä Sellasé⁸⁴ - shows that they were made governors with full powers and they at the same time sat on royal councils and tribunals. The careers of *Däjazmač* Gäbru and of *Wag Šum* Kābādā Tāfāri and his father *Wag Šum* Tāfāri Wāsān also falls within the same pattern.⁸⁵

What we see is therefore a king who reconstituted, as a matter of policy, the office of the governor and the two central institutions which are mainly composed of governors. The reign of Menilek is much better documented and there is ample evidence to show that he adopted the same policy as that of Yohannes.⁸⁶ Again as in the case of Yohannes, the so-called "federalist approach" is evoked when one discusses the northern provinces. But the governors of the southern provinces were governors who enjoyed immense internal autonomy while at the same time serving as imperial counsellors. Their residences and the *sāfārs* named after them in Addis Ababa, serve as eloquent testimonies to this institutional arrangement.

Hence, in the reign of Menilek as well, these institutions were made fully operative which explains the remarkable strength and resilience of the State under the latter's rule.

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Reconstructing the central institutions does, among other things, create suitable conditions to win the recognition of the *mākwanent* as a whole, but in particular of the regional ruling houses because this kind of institutional structure allowed them to retain considerable powers and privileges without at the same time damaging local power structures. In short, this kind of policy helped the new ruler to establish legitimacy and to consolidate his rule at a relatively low cost.

That these would be the consequences of implementing such a platform was seen in the reigns of Yohannes and Menilek. Téwodros committed a fundamental policy error by not adopting this line even more so because his social background

was rather dubious which placed under question mark his legitimacy much more than that of Yohannes and Menilek who belonged to regional ruling houses.

Téwodros, it is true, was a nobleman by birth, but he was not a member of a regional ruling house. In fact, his parentage was such that it gave his claims to nobility a dubious character. His rivals and enemies capitalized on this aspect of his regime. They could not swallow the idea of being the subjects of a man whose mother was a lowly "peddler" sitting on the throne of Solomon and Sheba and they becoming his subjects. They invariably believed that they had infinitely more right to the throne than he did.⁸⁷

This question of legitimacy was a critical factor in the widespread rebellions that wracked Téwodros's kingdom from the very beginning. What policies did he formulate to overcome this challenge? Ever more repression!

He himself had attempted to rally support in his early career against the Wära Séh precisely on the same count. He argued that they were not legitimate rulers and therefore they should be overthrown. He also believed that he had more rights and more legitimacy than them. As early as 1847, while he was governor of Dämbiya and Qwara, i.e. some eight years before he ascended the throne, he wrote to his Egyptian counterpart in the Sudan:

And now, O our brother, kingship has been awaiting us from generation to generation (lit. ancestor to ancestor) (for) about twenty Sultans, before Maru and before Kenfu. Our sovereign rights date from time past. They are old, not new. Now, God be praised, I have reached (lit. found) the place of my fathers and grandfathers. You were a friend of Kinfu before. We and he are brothers, sons of one father, and (this was) before the time when the Weyzero (Wäyzäro or Etege Menen) took the land. I was young (and) had not learned to ride. But now, God be praised, the weyzzero, however powerful she may be in the realm of Abyssinia, will not stand up against me. Ask the travellers and the foreign merchants (khawajat) if (you think) this is a lie... The land of my father, Gondär, formerly (belonging to) Haylu, the great sultan, is today in my possession.⁸⁸

This is not the only evidence that Kasa believed that he was a more legitimate person to rule the country. The anonymous chronicle published and translated by Fusella may have several problems as a source. But its information that Kasa, at about the same time as the above date, urged the nobles of Ali II to rise up against their master on the ground that the latter was not legitimate⁸⁹ squarely confirms the tenor of the above letter.

On the eve of the battle of Ayšal in 1853, Kasa was reported to have said that he was going to fight Ali because the latter who was a "Moslem" had usurped the

alga of his "fathers" (*abattočé*).⁹⁰ This oral tradition from *Aläqa Lämma* redacted by Māngestu Lämma further confirms the sources cited above.

The insight we get from such evidence undoubtedly helps us to understand the full meaning of his explanation of his rise to power in the famous letter of 1862 to Queen Victoria:

እስከዛሬ ድረስ አባቶቼ ነገሥታት ረግረዋቸንን ሲበድሉት
 መንግሥታቸውን ለጋላና ለተርክ አሳለፈው ሰጥባቸው ነበረ። ዛሬ ገን
 እኔ ከተወለድህ ረግረኩ ከመድ አንስቶ ኃይል ሰጥቶ በባቶቼ መንግሥት
 አቶጫ።

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Not surprisingly, he repeated exactly the same thing four years later in another letter to the same correspondent.⁹² Thus, there is conclusive proof to show that all along Kasa thought of himself as legitimate and the Wārā Séh as usurpers in very much the same vein the Solomonic kings argued vis-à-vis the Zagwés. Whether or not his claims were based on solid historical evidence is beside the point in this context. What matters most is to know his self-perception.

This self-image ran directly contrary to the image that he is given by scholars, literary writers and popularizers. Rubenson was not clearly impressed by Téwodros's claims when he wrote that

Whatever the truth may be about Tewodros' eventual royal ancestry, this was not an important element in his political platform, and it played no rôle whatsoever in his rise to power.⁹³

In another section of his book, Rubenson was even more laudatory:

The irrevocable step [in Kasa's career] was, however, the coronation in Deresge Maryam church. By that ceremony Kasa declared himself the successor to the long line of Ethiopian monarchs, the kings of the House of David and the line of Solomon. Kasa had seen to it that he had both the *Abun* and the *Içhege* there to provide the sanction of the Church. But even the cooperation of the Abun could not change the revolutionary character of this action. According to the *Kibre Negest*, it was the House of David and the House of David only that should rule Ethiopia. Tewodros' only possibility to make himself a legitimate Emperor would have been to make a bold claim, whether founded or unfounded, that he was the descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. In fact, Tewodros did not do this at the time of his coronation...⁹⁴

This is a rather sweeping statement, but at least Rubenson is cautious with regard to Kasa's social background. The image builders, i.e. the literary writers and the popularizers, have not been as cautious. They simply went ahead and blew the man up as a commoner who rose from the dusts of Qwara to the heights of the imperial throne.

The myth of Téwodros being a commoner would not however easily shake from him. His reign was very much bedeviled by the problem of legitimacy. His opponents universally agreed that he was not supposed to sit on the throne. The "son of a kosso-vendor" was a label that stuck to him right through to the end. Did he try to respond to this challenge in a constructive manner? The available sources do not indicate a positive answer. Nor have historians grappled with this issue of legitimacy at any length.

Crummey, in an interesting pioneer article on ideology and imperial legitimacy, to which we have already referred, took up the same issues. The essay focused on a description of what Téwodros, Täklä Giyorgis, Yohannes and Menilek did. What they, particularly Téwodros, failed to do in the sphere of formulating policies intended to win legitimacy, does not come out. This is indeed surprising because perhaps one of the most fundamental political problems of his reign was the question of legitimacy. There has been so much focus on "national unity", on the hated "regional nobility" and on the "conservatism and divisiveness of the Church" that his failure to win legitimacy was overlooked.

There were two ways he could pursue to attain legitimacy: institutional and ideological, neither of which he seems to have seriously taken up. Rather true to character, he resorted to repression which of course achieved the opposite of what he intended: further rebellion leading to still harsher repression ending in spiral violence.

"Millenarianism" is lately being more and more pressed on him as his principal ideological pillar. This theory stemmed from his adoption of the name "Téwodros". A recent sketch of his early career by Crummey does not bring out any messianic traits in his personality.⁹⁵ Nor do we see such a tendency in his career as a king from 1855 onwards, in his personality or his activities and policies.⁹⁶ Rubenson makes much of the name 'Téwdoros', but he does not press his arguments by showing us how it affected the person and above all his policies.⁹⁷

The published contemporary Ethiopian sources are not very helpful in underpinning the "millenarianism" of this very charismatic leader⁹⁸. Even Zänäb, whose opening words regarding the reasons for the demise of the Wära Séh and the rise of Kasa have been taken as the ultimate proof of his master's millenarianism, is not a significant source.⁹⁹ Firstly, that is precisely the image that Téwodros himself wants us to hold about himself, and secondly, the picture that Zänäb portrays in the subsequent pages is not of a messianic figure but of a

tyrant even if he had good intentions. Wäldä Maryam, Téwodros's other chronicler, abundantly reinforces the picture that emerges from Zänäb. The anonymous chronicler takes the point even further.

This is not an attempt to refute the "millenarian" theory. It is only to show that much more work remains to be done to substantiate it. The study by the eminent Ethiopicist, Professor Merid, that is included in this book, makes important contributions to this theory.¹⁰⁰

When we come to Yohannes, there does not arise much disagreement. That Yohannes belonged to one of the well-established Tigrean ruling houses does not seem to be challenged. On the other hand, his religiousness did not give rise to "millenarian" or other reformist interpretations. Rather, it used to be seen as fanaticism and therefore "reactionary" by observers. Thanks to the works of R. Caulk, Rubenson and young Ethiopians¹⁰¹ this image is now shaken and a more balanced picture of his religious policies is emerging.

- VII -

Of the many policies that the restoration of the monarchy called for, military organization would certainly be one of the key elements. And in this sphere, Téwodros has been given great credit that seems to enjoy wide currency. It is Rubenson who announces that the new king not long after his coronation in 1855, "undertook major organizational reforms in the army" and he cites Plowden as a witness whom he quotes thus:

... marshalling the soldiers into regiments, appointing officers of different grades, fixing their pay and the number of their private servants, and also mixing up soldiers from several provinces at random in those regiments, thus striking a mighty blow against the feudal system, under which the men clustered around the Chief of their native district, and followed him only in obedience or in revolt.¹⁰²

If one witness was enough, this indeed should be regarded as a major reform. However, Zänäb who is the other witness, but whom Rubenson relegates to a footnote, was not as impressed, and he did not wax so lyrical. He mentions, almost in passing, that Téwodros "counted" his soldiers and appointed officers from *aser aläqa* to a *šaläqa*.¹⁰³ Such testimony is found in chronicles of other emperors, yet nobody had taken them for major reforms. On the other hand, neither Wäldä Maryam nor the anonymous chronicler so much as mention even the counting of soldiers. In the face of such a discrepancy in the sources, there is clearly a need for another re-examination.

The other historians who touched upon the point tended to be laconic. Caulk, who wrote articles on military themes, simply bypasses the issue by saying that "the new ruler set out to create a disciplined and well-organized imperial army".¹⁰⁴ This sentence does not do justice to the so-called "reform". Crummeby wrote an essay on "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer" by basing himself on missionary sources. And yet he does not include "military reform" in what he calls, "the program of Kāssā - Téwodros".

To credit the new king with a "major organizational reform in the army" is a compliment that is very hard to substantiate. In the first place, the system of military organization of the Wārā Séh Mäsfenatē must be known before one can talk of "reforms". Going through all his published writings on the 19th century shows that Rubenson does not seem to have grasped the structure of the army fully. One dares conclude that the great theory about military reform is made without knowing the previous system against which it was made.¹⁰⁵ This further reinforces the point that has been made earlier in this essay: a reconstruction of the State system should be done to better understand the political, military and other events of the 19th century.

What then was the system of military organization in the era of the Wārā Séh Mäsfenatē? This is not the place to give an exhaustive treatment to this question. Only a brief analysis will be offered. Before all else, the published foreign and Ethiopian sources are sufficient for an understanding of the general outline of the system of military organization.¹⁰⁶ That Arnauld d'Abbadie was a good observer is a well established fact. He lived for years in the court of Gošu Zāwdé, the governor of Gojjam where he was able to observe at very close range how the whole system worked. He devotes a lengthy chapter to military organization in his book. There are constant references throughout the three volumes to the question of the army. Though his analysis is frequently marred by the deployment of concepts from European feudalism the entire account could be taken as a reliable presentation of the morphology of military organization. Lefebvre,¹⁰⁷ Plowden¹⁰⁸ and several other travellers have left information which helps to further flush out the skeletal structure. The references to the army in Asmé,¹⁰⁹ Täklä Iyāsūs¹¹⁰ and several other sources are useful to counter-check the foreign informants.

The system of military organization seems to be a rather complex structure. Under a regional lord, there were a variety of military units with varying functions and numerical strengths.¹¹¹ Taken as a whole, the army was divided into two segments: full time units and units which had non-military tasks in times of peace. The full-time military units were mainly the guards regiments (the *elfeñ zābāña*, the *jagrés* and the like) and specialised units such as matchlockmen and musketeers.¹¹²

The other component was made up of military regiments which would be called to service in times of mobilization. A good number of these regiments were

household departments taking care of the house or state functionaries like judges.¹¹³ In the Ethiopian state and societal system, it is rather simplistic, even misleading, to divide officials and titles into civilian and military. All state functionaries from the *mālkāna* all the way up to governors had obligations of military service built into their offices and into the land tenure system. Therefore, in times of war all, even including women, in state service would be called upon to go to war.

All the units - full-time and part-time - were structured in the same manner. The documents so far available are not very helpful as to the numerical strength of sections and units. These numbers should be regarded as examples subject to variations. Going bottom-up, five to 20 persons are grouped together under an *aser alāqa*. A few *aser alāqas* would be grouped into a large unit to be headed by an *hamsa alāqa*; and two or more *hamsa alāqas* would make the unit of *māto alāqa*; three or more of which would be a *šambāl*. The *šalāqa* was akin to a divisional commander or a corps commander.

This hierarchy was the norm in the era of the Wārā Séh Mäsfenatē.¹¹⁴ The impression one gets from the sources is of a fairly well-organised and compact structure. In spite of this, however, some scholars tend to see a rather loosely organised system which depends on *levée en masse* in times of war. There are frequent references to peasant levies in the literature and such a distinguished historian as Rubenson belongs to this school of interpretation.¹¹⁵ To be sure, a large number of the soldiers that went to war were peasants. But they were peasants who owned land whose tributary obligation included military service. And the peasants were grouped in various regiments in the above-mentioned fashion.

peasants
whose land
included
military
service

Mobilization was structural. The governors at the grass roots level - the *mālkāna/gultāna* and the district governor - were supposed to know how many of the peasants owned land which had military service as part of its tribute payment.¹¹⁶ And when mobilization was declared, they knew who should go and who should not and hence how many men they could raise from their territorial unit. In any case, in peace time, these soldier-peasants would render services - guards, *fana wägi*,¹¹⁷ maintenance and repair of tents¹¹⁸ and other camp equipment etc. to the State on a shift system. Failure to participate in their peacetime duties or in campaigns would result in punishment which could possibly include confiscation of their land.¹¹⁹

In the face of such a dynamic system of military organization, it should come as no wonder that Zänāb was not terribly impressed by what Téwodros did in 1855. Nor should it be regarded as a failure when Wäldä Maryam and the anonymous chronicler did not even mention it. For them, it was something that had existed for ages before. What nevertheless needs an explanation is why Plowden was so lyrical about a measure that did not impress the Ethiopians so much.

On the other hand, the attempt of Téwodros to introduce drilling and cadet courses, an attempt of far more revolutionary implications than the counting, have not been the subject of much research. Rubenson and Crummey overlook it. Caulk was however brief:

Early in his career, while still a raider of daring, Tewodros had seen his dashing army of thousands decimated by the accurate fire of eight hundred entrenched Egyptian regulars with muskets and two guns. He had tried to make guns from tree trunks. With no more success, once he had become Emperor, he assigned an Englishman to train some of his men. But the cadets mutinied against the tedium of European drill and that project too failed. Later Tewodros did succeed in bringing the missionary artisans he had settled near Debre Tabor at Gafat to cast cannon.¹²⁰

This rather brief analysis raises more questions than it answers. For instance, why did Téwodros acquiesce when "the cadets mutinied against the tedium of European drill" - a man who was not given to acquiescing that easily?

Professor Pankhurst, who normally quotes available sources exhaustively, is uncharacteristically brief on this issue:

Téwodros was the first of several rulers to attempt the modernisation of the army. According to Plowden he "created generals in place of feudal chieftains", while, according to Dufton, he attempted to establish "a regular standing army armed with muskets only" and was also "much in favour of adopting European discipline". He accordingly gave 1,000 men for training to his English adviser, John Bell. The men however, did not take kindly to the discipline and the scheme had to be abandoned. Undeterred, the Emperor himself carried out part of the training, and according to Kirkham, for a time also employed "two or three" French drill masters.¹²¹

This is all there is on the so-called "major military reform". Thus, none of the established historians has fully argued out a case for this achievement and the whole image of the man is based on incomplete historical studies.

The same critique applies to the account on introduction of salaries. The historian who popularized this reform more than anybody else was again Rubenson. In order "to break" what he calls "the feudal pattern of government" Rubenson tells us that

... Téwodros resolved that governors and judges should be his personal salaried appointees and that all military forces should be integrated into a national army under his command. This army should be properly

organised and disciplined, and wages or allowances should take the place of indiscriminate pillaging.¹²²

Again this account is based solely on Plowden and that none of his chroniclers is helpful in this regard. If this "reform" was so important as Plowden and following him Rubenson make it out to be, then the question inevitably arises as to why the contemporary Ethiopian sources - at least the chronicles - were so silent?

Perhaps, the more important issue here is not so much its novelty (which it was not) as it was the identity of the *dām-wāzāñōč*.

In as far as "governors" were concerned, we have tried to argue above that these officials seem to have been *meslānēs* rather than fully-fledged governors of the old type. A *meslānē* would normally live off a part of the tribute from the territorial unit under his jurisdiction just like the governor of yore. At any rate, the available sources do not indicate any efforts to make them salaried. Moreover, the fact that the economy was still predominantly at the stage of using the *amolē* as the medium of exchange¹²³ would be a bar to the introduction of salaries to functionaries who were flung far and wide in his kingdom not to mention the total absence of infrastructures - bureaucracy, a written accounting system¹²⁴ etc.

Nevertheless, the theory that Tēwodros attempted to introduce the "salary system" was not absolutely groundless. He did implement, we are told by Gābrā Heywāt, Heruy and Mahtāmā Selasé, the *qālāb/dām-wāz* system, presumably on a large scale.¹²⁵ Though elliptical, these traditions do indeed seem authentic. They inform us that "his" *mākwanent* and soldiery lived on *qālāb/dām-wāz*. Rubenson, following Plowden and other sources, is full of praise for this policy. But, given the objective conditions of the time one could ask whether it was a wise policy. As it turned out, it gave rise to a crisis to resolve which Tēwodros had to go into conflict with the Church which in turn further confounded his problems.¹²⁶

A couple of points should also be made on these two terms. Both words were interchangeably used and they meant regular payment in kind - i.e. provisions - in this period.¹²⁷ Secondly, the tradition of giving regular payments (whatever the form) was not a novel institution and there are quite several sources that demonstrate that all the big lords in the Māsēnate did give out *qālāb* and *dām-wāz* (i.e. salary) to a large number of people.¹²⁸

Zānāb, Wāldā Maryam and a number of other sources underscore that from the very beginning the king applied the old system - like *serit* - on a large scale.¹²⁹

All this calls for a fresh examination of the whole issue and for a fresh perspective.

Restoration of the monarchy called for a new policy on the Church. Considerable attention has been given by historians to the religious policies of Téwodros and Yohannes.¹³⁰ As usual, Crummey has taken the lead in the investigation of these policies, though Caulk has also written an important article on this subject as it affected the rule of Yohannes. In Crummey's view, "each of these men drew heavily on religion in their attempts to establish themselves, thereby affecting both the structure of the Orthodox Church and more closely defining its teaching Orthodoxy".¹³¹ Crummey very strongly stresses this thesis when in another place he elaborates on it:

In their attempts to reconstruct the empire, the major aspirants to imperial rule in the later nineteenth century all launched appeals to Orthodox sentiment, and drew on mythic elements associated with it. They had few other means of creating a national following or of rousing popular support outside their base areas, especially as none could play a strong Solomonic card. During the *Zamana Masafent* the leading public figures had made similar appeals, but to sectarian sentiment, thereby precluding national roles for themselves and intensifying divisions.¹³²

He further underscores this thesis in another study by adducing more "evidence".¹³³ He cites de Jacobis' interpretation of the encounter between Kasa and Sälama in Gonder in mid-1854:

During that encounter, he [de Jacobis] maintains a 'Concordat' was established whereby the national autonomy of the Church and the understanding which Kāsā and Salāmā reached by calling it a 'concordat'. Nevertheless, there seems to have taken place a genuine, if tacit, agreement, whereby secular and religious power would be used in mutual support for the restoration of national life. This, I believe, is the first element in the programme of Kāsā-Téwodros: the re-constitution of the traditional institutions of the land - a re-constitution which entailed the organizational unity of the Church, the end of doctrinal divisions, and the restoration of episcopal authority.¹³⁴

Though he endeavours to see the religious policies as a component part of the process of imperial reconstruction, his argument in the end shows these leaders intervening in religion to promote their own political interests - i.e. to promote and consolidate unification and centralization of the monarchy. This view enjoys wide currency among historians of 19th century Ethiopia. Crummey's position has not been changed by time; it seems to have rather been consolidated. In addition to his contributions, some interesting work has been done on the rather controversial religious policies of Yohannes which has clarified a good number of

myths and misinterpretations.¹³⁵ It is now established that Yohannes's motives were much more political than fanatical.

Even if it is widely recognized that the king was the head of the Church, it is believed that Church and State were two organisms living in symbiosis and that the *de jure* head of the Church was in actual fact the *abun*, while the king was the *de facto* head. This view is shared by the authorities in the area.¹³⁶

But as I have tried to contend elsewhere at some length, the Ethiopian *Aṣṣé* state had always been a theocratic state, and consequently one among the multiple functions of the king was to give religious leadership.¹³⁷

The ultimate authorities in matters of dogma were the kings, and not at all the metropolitan nor the *eṣṣägé*. Nor were these two ecclesiastical dignitaries leaders of the Church - be it nominal or theoretical, actual or administrative. It was the kings who held this post. The clergy and all other ecclesiastical authorities would go to them with their administrative as well as doctrinal problems seeking decisions and solutions once the latter acceded to the throne. Abbots of monasteries - regardless of their status - were appointed and dismissed by Kings and the *mākwānent*.

Rather than being two organisms living with each other in symbiotic harmony, as we are led to believe by scholars, Church and State constituted one organism. This thesis may have to be further underscored by the statement that the Church was just an organ or bodily part of the State system.

Whether or not Téwodros and his successors had political motives in addressing Church issues does not invalidate the point that it was no less their duty to solve outstanding internal problems of the institution including doctrinal matters. Their religious activities should rather be investigated in this light for a correct assessment of their significance.

The Wārā Séh rulers were not able to resolve the internal problems of the Church most probably because they were suzerains rather than sovereigns which meant that they did not hold all the traditional powers and functions of the *Aṣṣé* including religious ones.

Téwodros's dealings with the Church have been as much the subject of praise in our days as it was of condemnation in his. The issue was a complex one involving, as Crummey rightly stresses, questions of authority and tribute.¹³⁸ The Church, it appears, did not readily accept him as its spiritual head. Could it be because of the relapse of monarchical authority in the previous decades that institutional ties between King and Church were forgotten? These are issues that are worth considering in the context of the structural history of the Wārā Séh Māsēfēnate. At this point, it could suffice to state that *Abunā Sālāma* repeatedly

challenged the ultimate authority of the king over him and the institution of the Church as a whole. At times, he even acted as the representative of the Church, an action which was not expected from this office as the *Abun* did not have the power to represent this institution.¹³⁹

The other dimension of the conflict - the land issue - was from the very beginning a hot one which aroused much passion both for and against it right to the present.¹⁴⁰ This made it a subject of much discussion and writing. As a result, it evolved into an item of considerable misunderstanding and myth.

Téwodros seems to have had his eye on Church land and on the tributes that accrued from it. This was because he needed more resources to support his army. One may ask at this point - how did Ali II and his predecessors support their armies which were very large? And why did Téwodros not try to transfer these resources to his army? An early 20th century case shows that the victors would confiscate the lands of the vanquished on the grounds of *lése majesté* and transfer them to their soldiers.¹⁴¹ Did Téwodros do this? Why did he not try to spread out his legions over the provinces in the traditions of yore as well as Yohannes and Menilek later did? All these questions could only be answered by intensive research.

What emerges from the sources so far available is that he was hard put to it to find the wherewithal to maintain his large army. Therefore, he turned to Church land and the tributes therefrom.¹⁴²

For a long time, this move was lauded as "land reform" by historians.¹⁴³ It was Crummey who persuasively challenged this view¹⁴⁴, and concluded that:

The reign of Téwodros was turbulent and there has been a recurrent tendency among younger Ethiopians to interpret that turbulence in terms of attempts by the emperor to liberate the peasantry from feudal exactions. Contemporary records give scant support for this view, stressing rather tussles between the court and the Church over tribute, tussles which grew more acute as the emperor failed to subdue his rivals, but which issued in victory for the Church.¹⁴⁵

This interpretation indeed represented an important step over previous theories. The question still remains whether the tussle was on tribute only. Without knowing much more about the nature of land tenure than we do now, it is not correct to exclude land from the analysis. But even then, what was involved was only Church land and what was intended was not ameliorating the conditions of the peasant, but rather transfer from the hands of the prayers to those of the warriors. Anyway, the whole issue is not yet resolved and shows that a more extensive investigation is called for.

Be this as it may, much significance has been attached to Téwodros's conflict with the Church. Though he recognized the King's failure "to come to terms with... the locally powerful landed aristocracy"¹⁴⁶ as an important factor, Rubenson argued that his failure "to ally himself with this institution [the Church], even at the cost of certain concessions, is probably the single most important cause of his failure to unite Ethiopia".¹⁴⁷

The facts do not support this assertion. Téwodros did not lock horns with the Church up to the end of 1860. It was then that he started an open attack on it. But by then the regional nobility had been in rebellion everywhere, in most cases for the previous five years. It is obvious that the quarrel with the Church only further aggravated an already existing problem. It was perhaps for this reason that Crummey did not accept Rubenson's explanation,

On this point, however, there is some difference of interpretation between us, in that I see Téwodros's failure as lying in his inability to destroy the regional princes, while Rubenson stresses his failure to cope with the Church.¹⁴⁸

Putting his finger on the regional nobility is right though Téwodros's failure was not so much due to "his inability to destroy the regional princes" which he had already done in 1853-5 as it was his inability to integrate a greater proportion of the nobility into his state system.

Yohannes's religious policies, on the other hand, were not so much the subject of passion and controversy as those of his predecessor. Suffice it to point out that what makes Yohannes rather unique among the monarchs of the 19th century and what places him in the company of early Solomonic like Zār'a-Ya'eqob (1434-1488) was that in his reign and in his activities one can clearly see the religious and spiritual functions of the *Aṣṣé*, functions which tend to be obscured in the case of other kings.

- IX -

Restoring the monarchy also entailed reinstating its traditional ideology back into its position of supremacy. The core element of this ideology was the legend of the union of Solomon and Šeba from which issued Menelik, the founder of the Solomonic dynasty.

Scholars have already pointed out that the *Kebrä Nägäst* was much more than a myth concocted to legitimize a dynasty. It was also a source of national identity and patriotism; and it elaborated a system of thought that explained and legitimized a hierarchical and exploitative political order.¹⁴⁹ This system of thought was therefore a fully fledged political ideology whose fundamental strength lay in

its being inextricably interwoven with the principal tenets of the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, an interweaving that converted the thought into a religious ideology.

The Ethiopian Church was the principal intellectual upholder and promoter of this ideology. Thus, the Church became a kind of "national" or "tribal" church and its teachings took on the character of so-called "tribal" religions - i.e. religions exclusive to given ethnic and national communities. As a result, Ethiopian Orthodoxy was akin more to Judaism and to traditional religions of other African countries than to ecumenical Catholicism or Protestantism of Western Christendom.

It was therefore well-nigh impossible for new leaders like Kasa and Kasa to fashion new political ideologies. They had to modify the old one to suit the new conditions. They were also forced to establish a link with the dynasty.

Scholars have not as yet developed a concept for this multi-purpose system of religious-political thought. They simply restricted themselves to the use of the qualifying "Solomonic". To facilitate the analysis in this essay, I propose the term "*Solomonism*" for the whole ideology.

In addition to all its other services as a political ideology, Solomonism "provides a mandate for the Ethiopian kingdom to expand its dominion...."¹⁵⁰ The expansion of the early Solomonic was charged with "a tremendous sense of mission".¹⁵¹ Amdä Šeyon (1314-1344) rose to this "mission" and built a large empire which on the map looks more or less like the present Ethiopia. The name "Ethiopia" itself was given a meaning which raised it from a mere designation of a country to the level of a religious concept.¹⁵² A considerable proportion of the territorial extent of this empire fell off one after another in the wake of the civil wars fought with Imam Ahmād ibn Ibrahim, commonly known as Ahmād Grañ and the subsequent migrations of several ethnic groups. The Oromo were the biggest.

The process of the shrinkage of the empire reached its lowest point at the beginning of the 18th century when Šäwa broke away. The last king of the Solomonic dynasty "to exercise any authority whatever of his own" launched a campaign to reunify Šäwa in 1782/3. It failed. And he himself was overthrown in 1784 which brought about the replacement of the monarchy by the Wärä Séh Mäsfenat in 1786.¹⁵³ Therefore, it behoves upon the man who wanted to restore the monarchy to bring under the crown all the territorial units of the Solomonic Empire. His very title, King of Kings of Ethiopia, would only have meaning if the old empire was restored.

Crummey's article on the ideological adaptations introduced by Téwodros, Yohannes and Menilek has already been cited. The attempt to trace changes in

the state ideology is certainly among the strengths of this essay. One feels that its focus on titles, on marriage principles, on claims to Solomonic blood as important new elements in the system of thought, though appreciable, needs to be redirected to bring out other more important tenets. This could fruitfully be done after a full-blown treatment of Solomonism from its genesis all the way to the last decades of the 18th century.

What for instance needs to be looked into is the question of territorial extent of the Solomonic state which was built into the political thought. That it was the duty of the monarchy to restore all its ancient provinces comes out very strongly in the documents drawn by or under the auspices of Yohannes and Menilek. The letter of Yohannes of 1881 written to Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and the chronicle and letters of Menilek would suffice as examples. In his letter Yohannes's main purpose was to ask Kaiser Wilhelm II to mediate in his conflicts with Egypt and to outline the extent of Ethiopia's territorial claims. It would do justice to his ideas to quote him at some length:

I shall be satisfied if Your Majesty will mediate, so long as it is done on the basis of what my ancestors, the Emperors of Ethiopia, held prior to the fall of the regime due to the advent of Gragn. After Gragn the Empire was regained during Sertse Dengel, Iyasu I, and Fasil, and later was lost by a certain Gugsä.... To the east and south[-east] the boundary is the sea. To the west and north, where there Haran Dawa, Gash, Massawa, Bedew Shoho, and Tiltal. Further, the regions inhabited by Galla, Shankilla, and Adal is all mine and yet recently in the middle of Shoa[!], a place known by the name of Harar was taken [from us]. All the same I listed these places so that my country's boundaries be known.¹⁵⁴

This is a very interesting letter. Even if it betrays some geographical and historical confusion, the main thrust of the argument comes out forcefully: the restoration of the territorial extent of the pre-16th century Solomonic state (1330s-1529). The 1891 circular letter of Menilek was written along the same lines. His territorial claims are based on the same logic.¹⁵⁵ His chronicle clearly shows that in his expansion Menilek was inspired and followed in the footsteps of the pre-16th century Solomonic kings.¹⁵⁶

Ultimately the ideological root goes to *Kebrä Nägäst* as was pointed out above and to the ideas behind the name "Ethiopia" which are intimately tied up with the ideological *raison d'être* and mission of the Solomonic dynasty. The point here is the need to bring out the *mentalité* of the kings and of their lords, to fathom their rationale and the origin of their national aspirations. My contention is that restoring the *aṣé* state necessitated, at the ideological level, the restoration of the territorial extent of the pre-16th century Solomonic state.

The whole process of "restoration" in this sense was set off by Téwodros when he reunified Šāwa into his kingdom. His very name itself further reinforces this argument because the Téwodros of the Books would come to restore Ethiopia and the throne to their ancient glory which of course included regaining its lost provinces.¹⁵⁷ Yohannes fully followed up this task. After all Menilek incorporated most of the areas while he was a vassal of Yohannes and with the latter's blessings and at times even encouragement. Zewde Gabre-Sellassie's biography of Yohannes might suffer from some serious shortcomings¹⁵⁸ but his plea for the recognition of this contribution is very well grounded:

Within this policy of religious unification there was the broader ideal of the incorporation of large tracts of land historically part of Ethiopia and still more closely linked to the Empire than to any other powerful state. Concomitant with this ideal of religious reunification was its translation into territorial gain. ...Yohannes had two powerful vassals in Menilek and Ras Adal of Gojjam whom he ... [used] to extend their zone of control to the south.¹⁵⁹

A reference has already been made to the pioneering works of Crummey in the sphere of ideology in which he tried, inter alia, to "explore ideology and the legitimacy of imperial authority in later 19th century Ethiopia". He recognized that

Ethiopia's would-be rulers of the later 19th century saw themselves engaged in reconstruction. A recurrent phrase in their communications is *abbatoché*, 'my fathers', by which they meant their ancestors as imperial rulers.¹⁶⁰

But Crummey failed to demonstrate that these men and their numerous followers shared the belief that restoration of the lost provinces of Ethiopia constituted an essential element in the process of, to adopt his own words, "recreating the empire".¹⁶¹

While bringing under his rule the northern provinces of Ethiopia, i.e. those found from Šāwa to the north, hardly qualifies Téwodros as a great unifier, he would quite rightly be defined as a pioneer who set the agenda for subsequent generations of "unifiers" or "reunifiers" or "empire-builders", who followed in his footsteps of imperial reconstruction which involved the regaining of the lost provinces, whatever they could be called depending on the political positions of the historian.

Many were the myths surrounding Téwodros! Even his death and its consequences generated myths. Regarding the place of Mäqdäla in Ethiopian history, Professor Rubenson has effectively and definitely blown to pieces the whole myth surrounding it.¹⁶² It was what followed Mäqdäla that is still shrouded in a mythology. Its roots go back to 1868 itself. Its making reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the State system on the part of those who made it.

Ethiopia was finished now that Téwodros was dead - that seems to have been the conclusion of contemporary European observers!¹⁶³ Dufton, a European traveller, doubted that Ethiopians would "be able to maintain even their existence as a nation" even before the death of Téwodros.¹⁶⁴ Following his death, anarchy and complete division were expected as a matter of course. Even Rubenson who so well documented these "prophecies" and who nonetheless concluded that "the idea that anarchy would necessarily follow and increase was nevertheless wrong"¹⁶⁵ was not entirely free of similar beliefs about it because he declared in another place that "in the end Téwodros left Ethiopia as divided as he had found it".¹⁶⁶ In the first place, as I have tried to argue in my chapter in this book, he did not find it divided. On the other hand, if an eminent (even if empiricist) Ethiopicist such as Caulk could believe that Ethiopia was "on the brink of dissolution for much of the 19th century"¹⁶⁷ then one can conclude that the theory has the full blessings of the historical establishment.

At the risk of appearing blasphemous, one could raise the legitimate question to what extent this gloomy picture was thoroughly grounded in the realities of Ethiopian society. This in turn leads, to requote Caulk, to "more important questions of how an African state which seemed on the brink of dissolution for much of the nineteenth century could have survived the partition with its independence and most of its territories intact."¹⁶⁸ These are problems that call for serious rethinking. Both of them ultimately constitute a structural *problematique* - a *problematique* of the morphology and dynamics of the Ethiopian state system.

Historians have been hard put to it to explain what exactly Téwodros's legacy was. There was nothing concrete left behind - only a divided, warring Ethiopia. Finally, Rubenson got round this problem by identifying the man's principal legacy as something invisible - "the idea of a united, strong Ethiopia!"¹⁶⁹ Very much unlike other established empiricist historians, neither Rubenson nor Caulk nor any of their colleagues could document this interpretation. Only circumstantial evidence could be given.

To my mind Téwodros did leave behind a concrete legacy. This was the institution of the monarchy. In this regard, he was successful. It had been restored with some, if not all, of the rituals and effectively functioned for no less than ten

years. That he could not be succeeded to the throne by a member of his own family had become clear by 1865 when he lost control of most of the provinces to rebels who aspired to the crown. He himself, let alone his son or any other close relative, had not succeeded in gaining legitimacy. The members of the old Solomonic House of Gondär had so discredited themselves over the years and were so powerless that there was no question of restoring them. These two factors left room to others who could claim Solomonic blood and who at the same time had sufficient military strength under them to bid for the throne. In short, succession became open to men outside of the old Solomonic family and outside of Téwodros's family.¹⁷⁰

"Warfare was the principal means of conducting politics in our period" - so concluded Crummey after a careful examination of the institution of *šeftenät*.¹⁷¹ This insight was fully borne out by the events following the death of Téwodros. By 1865, the rebels against the emperor were many. But we see curious developments from this year onwards. This was the successful attempt of some of the stronger rebel leaders in trying to bring about the submission of the less strong *šeftas*. Gobäzé of Lasta attained, by 1867, the recognition of his suzerainty by Mästäwat and Wärqit of Wära Himäno. Kasa Merča of Tegräy who in his turn had brought in the meantime all the political *šeftas* of Tegräy under his control recognized the suzerainty of Gobäzé.¹⁷² When the British were marching through his domain in early 1868, Gobäzé was on a campaign in Semén-Wälqayt trying to subdue the formidable Gobäzé - a namesake nicknamed Téso or Terso. In March 1868, Tiso was killed in a battle and Gobäzé Gäbrä Mädhén became lord over Semén, Wägära, Wälqayt and the other lowland districts in addition to those he controlled in central Ethiopia.

Menilek of Šäwa had to fight in August 1868 at Gadilo in Yifat against Bāzabeh who had already rebelled against Téwodros. After ensuring that the other lords of Šäwa had recognized him, he crowned himself as King of Kings of Ethiopia(!) in the same year.

Thus long before Téwodros died, we see a development that was nothing but a succession strife. This strife gave the impression of anarchy, of fragmentation, of dissolution. It should rather be viewed as an Ethiopian version of "election campaigns". If a scholar took election campaigns in a pluralist, democratic state as "dissolution" or "fragmentation of the country", he would not surely be taken very seriously.

Rubenson and Caulk were not therefore right in their views on the civil war of the late 1860s. In spite of this view, Rubenson has made substantial contributions to our understanding of the secrets of the survival of Ethiopian independence.

The survival of Ethiopia's independence in the midst of a continent that was colonized from end to end was explained by "the impregnability of her mountains" or by the weakness of the armies that were sent to subjugate her. Rubenson rejected these explanations and proposed a different set of factors:

... firstly, the diplomatic, political, and military conditions on the European (and the Turkish-Egyptian) side; secondly, the actual political and military conditions on the Ethiopian side; thirdly, the serious and repeated miscalculations of Ethiopia's strength by its 'protectors' and invaders.¹⁷³

He examined these three categories and argued that

The first two of these categories are obvious, and my contribution was only a slight shift of emphasis. I submitted that 'from the point of view of Ethiopian history, it is far more important to investigate the conditions in Ethiopia, which enabled it to withstand the political and military attacks on its independence, than to deal with various European factors forwarding or hampering the advance of colonialism in the area'.¹⁷⁴

He then meticulously examined these conditions in great detail and concluded his major study with the explanation that

the underlying reasons why the Ethiopians succeeded in neutralizing the attempts to partition the country ... or to limit its sovereignty and ultimately subdue it are to be found more in the awareness of a spiritual and national identity than in material resources. The consciousness of a separate identity was part of the heritage from earlier centuries.¹⁷⁵

He then analyses the significance of Orthodoxy, the existence of a national State and a monarchy which is over two millennia old and concludes that these factors did contribute. But

What really saved Ethiopia from falling under colonial rule was the determination with which this heritage of national consciousness, international recognition, and political diplomatic skill was developed to meet the new challenges.¹⁷⁶

This determination was really helped by the fact that their adversaries seriously underestimated the Ethiopians which enabled them to repulse them effectively.¹⁷⁷

Since the appearance of his monograph, H. Erlich has also grappled with the same question and he proposes a different factor. He acknowledges Rubenson's work as "an authoritative and detailed study ... [which] constitutes a major contribution to this subject."¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless,

It is my contention, that it was not so much the political awareness and diplomatic skill of her leaders that enabled Ethiopia to withstand the pressure and emerge victorious; rather it was the ability of its natural leaders to mobilise and organise militarily as well as politically all levels of Ethiopian society. Due to socio-political flexibility, talented individuals, coming from whatever background, were encouraged instead of blocked by traditional values to do their utmost and make their way to the various leading positions. Thus young princes were seldom born into power.¹⁷⁹

He further elaborates this thesis in a later article by developing the theory of "flexibility of institutions and values" of Ethiopia.¹⁸⁰ In order to explain "Ethiopia's uniqueness in ... most of the Afro-Asian world",¹⁸¹ what others have called "an abnormal phenomenon"¹⁸², he contends,

An understanding of Ethiopia's own history affords a better-balanced explanation. ... Ethiopia could rely on a system of flexible and pragmatic socio-political institutions. This system for centuries had stood the test of external threats, as well as of internal fragmentation, and had enabled Ethiopia to mobilize in times of crisis hundreds of thousands of fighters under a generally unified leadership.¹⁸³

Erich should be given credit for shifting the emphasis onto institutions from Rubenson's rather nebulous "national consciousness". World history is replete with accounts of peoples with tremendous national consciousness falling under external rule.

The merit of his effort lies in trying to explain how the country could have talented men and how they could mobilize the country so well. But there is a big hole in his theory. It is based on the study of Alula, the general who rose to supreme position not by blood but by merit. But there were but few Alulas among the whole array of competent generals and skilled diplomats of the entire second half of the 19th century.

If, for example, we take Adwa as a case in point for the simple reason that most of the lords of the country took part in this battle, we see that there were only a few men who rose from a lowly to the highest position (Alula himself, Habtä Giyorgis, and Balča). All the rest of the top generals were men who belonged to the important families which could count back their pedigrees at least to the middle of the 18th century.

If, contrary to what Erlich says, most of the top men of the country since the fall of Téwodros were members of the *mākwānent* and *māsafent* class, then his theory of the "flexibility of institutions and values" stands in need of modification.

That Ethiopia could have such a series of talented warriors and diplomats in this era could be explained by the prevailing conditions of State and society following the decline of Téwodros. It is again a structural approach that will help us understand this phenomenon.

Granted that the 1860s - the whole decade - were bloody years, years full of wars and mass devastations unlike any other since the rise of Gugsä to power at the turn of the 19th century. Notwithstanding the universal view about the "anarchy" "civil wars", "warlordism" of the so-called *Zāmānā Māsafent*, in none of the five decades after 1800 did so much bloodshed and destruction befall this country as in the years around 1861 to 1868. And most of the blame for this enormous tragedy squarely lies at the door of Téwodros - a fact that should have given all the intellectuals and literary writers who put him up as a role model considerable food for thought.

Nevertheless, for all its misery, the period made the political system competitive and dynamic much more than many eras before and after. The universal antipathy to the emperor brought about widespread rebellion to unseat him. In other words, power became open for the taker. To be sure, just anybody could not aspire to the throne. One had to belong to regional ruling houses which, of course, enabled him to control local military structures. But this power base was only a launching pad. To mount to supreme position, one had to compete - not by peaceful electioneering - but by warfare. Täklä Giyorgis, Yohannes and Menilek had to fight their way up - every inch of it. Hence, they surrounded themselves with men and women who could help them do it. Those not so fit had to give way to those who were competent. Thus, for all its gloomy picture, the decade of the 1860s created competitiveness as the medium of accession to national power. This competitiveness enabled the society to throw up a whole array of men of talent to positions of power and influence!

The era was the era of imperialism and colonialism. For the country's independence to survive, heroes were needed; seasoned warriors were called for. And the society produced them in numbers not by any decision but by this structural factor. Armies were organised made up of tested warriors and commanded by able officers. All of the battles fought against the Egyptians, Mahdists and Italians attested to good generalship.

Thus, the peculiar circumstances of the restoration of the monarchy, the inability of Téwodros to gain legitimacy and consolidate himself enabled the country to retain her independence in an era when most proud nations and ancient states in "the Afro-Asian world" were humbled one after another.

Over the last three decades, the field of 19th century Ethiopian historiography has registered considerable advances. Although several historians contributed, we owe a great deal to the works of Abir, Caulk, Crummey and Rubenson who have been in the lead in this advance. Nevertheless, it follows from the burden of analysis of this essay and of the other on the *Zāmānā Māsafent* that the basic assumptions do stand in need of revision.

Accounts of the *Zāmānā Māsafent* are premised on assumptions of collapse of State and anarchy which, as has been demonstrated, appears to be inadequate on closer examination. The Amhara/Tegray vs. Oromo thesis of Abir was effectively disproved by Crummey.¹⁸⁴ Crummey's analysis must be developed further by a structural approach.

The whole reigns of Téwodros and of Yohannes contain several myths that call for a rigorous scrutiny of the sources. The place of the Church in politics has been the subject of discussion in many of the writings on the period. The basic assumptions on the importance of the Church in national politics and of its doctrinal divisions are predicated on a rather incomplete understanding of the place of this religious institution within the morphology of the state system. All this calls for a fresh anatomical study of religio-political and social institutions.

This kind of re-examination cuts both ways - backwards to the genesis of the *Zāmānā Māsafent* and forwards to the emergence of the empire state of Menilek.

Notes

1. A. Triulzi, "Centre-Periphery Relations in Ethiopian Studies: Reflections on Ten Years of Research on Wellega History", in S. Rubenson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, Uppsala and East Lansing, 1984), p.360; for the latest and most positive assessment of developments in Ethiopian historiography, particularly the contributions of the Department of History (AAU), see D. Crummey, "Society, State and Nationality in the Recent Historiography of Ethiopia," *Journal of African History*, XXXI (1990), pp. 103-119.
2. For a detailed list of their writings, see entries under their name in the bibliography in this volume.
3. With a few exceptions (Crummey, Ege), the studies are not informed by models and paradigms. The predominant theoretical framework is empiricism of the British kind. The best works (Rubenson and Caulk are on top of the list) are within this school. Hence, it is not fruitful to organize the review along paradigms or theories. See for instance, *African Studies Review* XXIV, 2 & 3 (June/September, 1981) pp. 139-208 where an excellent review is given on the basis of the theories that inform the various writings.

Paradigms

4. Travellers of the first half of the 19th century drew parallels with the Mayors of the Palace. See W. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country* (London, 1868), p. 38.
5. See *supra*, p. 141.
6. M. Abir, *Ethiopia - Era of Princes: The Challenge of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire. 1769-1855* (London, 1968), pp. 44-72.
7. D. Crummey, "Ethiopian Plow Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XVI, (1983), pp. 1-24.
8. *Ibid.*, p.6.
9. For a carefully compiled account of the extent of violence and warfare see D. Crummey, "The Violence of Tewodros", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, IX, 2, (1971); *idem.*, "Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", in S. Rubenson (ed.) *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, Uppsala and East Lansing, 1984). Crummey, in fact, concludes his study that, "So intensive, indeed, were the civil wars of Tewodros, and so heavy did his terrorism lie on the land that it can be seen as a turning point in Ethiopian history." "The Violence...", p.107.
10. D. Crummey, Review of *Era of Princes* in *Journal of African History*, XI, 2, (1970), pp. 280-282.
11. S. Rubenson, *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, Nairobi, 1966), p.46.
12. Plowden, pp. 453-482.
13. Gäbrä Heywät Baykädañ, "Até Menilek ena Ityopya", *Berhan Yehun* (Asmara, 1912), p. 343.
14. See vignette under Téwodros in Heruy Wäldä Sellasé, *Yä Heywät Tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1915 E.C.), p.38.
15. Täklä Şadiq Mäkuriya, *Yä Ityopya Tarik Kä Aşé Téwodros Eskä Qädamawi Haylä Sellasé* (Addis Ababa, rep. 1964 E.C.), pp. 7ff.
16. See Zänäb, *Yä Téwodros Tarik* (Princeton, 1902); Wäldä Maryam, *Chronique de Théodoros II, roi des rois d'Ethiopie* (Paris, 1904); for the anonymous chronicler, see L. Fusella (ed.), *Yasé Téwodros Tarik* (Rome, 1959); also in Italian trans., "La cronaca dell'imperatore Teodoro II di Etiopia in un manoscritto amarico", *Annali di Istituto Universitario di Napoli*, (1957-59), n.5, VI-VIII. Unlike Zänäb and Wäldä Maryam, the anonymous chronicler seems to be knowledgeable about the world and modern technology. He admires Téwodros as a modernizer (pp. 65-66 of Vol. VIII) and yet he does not credit him as a unifier. See also Gäbrä Selasé, *Tarikä Zämän Zä-Dagmawi Menilek Negusä Nägäst Zä-Ityopya* (Addis Ababa, 1959), p. 121 where he writes that Téwodros was an overthrower of the state in a rather condemnatory tone.
17. For Aşmé, see the translation and annotation by Bairu Tafla (ed.), *Asma Giyorgis and His Work: History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Şäwa* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 452 ff., 564ff.
18. "National unity" or "re-unification" is the leitmotif of the writings of Rubenson, Crummey, Täklä Şadiq, Caulk, Darkwah, Pankhurst and many others on the reign of Téwodros. According to Rubenson (*King of Kings*), alienation of the Church "is probably the single most important cause for his failure to unite Ethiopia." (p.72). The rebellions against his rule are explained in terms of "resistance to unification and centralization." (p.75). Crummey's essays are also organised round the same theme. According to Crummey, the new emperor was much superior to, and "much more progressive" than his opponents because of "his vision of national re-unification, modernization and renewed national purpose" ("Violence...", p.114); "his goals of ... national re-unification ... continued to elude him..." (p.109); one of his major failings was that

"six years after his advent to the throne Tēwodros was not significantly further ahead in finding a basic political [emphasis in the original] solution to the question of national unity." (p.120). Tāklā Sadiq recently published an extensive biography, *Aṣṣ Tēwodros ena Yā-Itopya Andenāt* (Addis Ababa, 1981 E.C.), where the same theme is hammered.

19. See Crummey, "The Violence..." and also *Idem.*, "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer", *Journal of African History* X, 3 (1969). See also commentaries in n.18 above.
20. M. Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London, 1969), pp. 267-8. D. Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism", *Past and Present*, 89 (Nov. 1980), pp. 124-5; *idem.*, "Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia during the *Zamana Masafent*" *International Journal of African Historical Studies* VIII, No.2, (1975), p.269. Crummey neatly summarizes the theory as follows:

Abyssinian political history has a major motif of centrifugal tendencies, which are associated a great deal more with the drives of the nobility towards maximum local autonomy than with the ethnic or regional identities to which many previous commentators have attributed them. These centrifugal forces triumphed from the 1770s to the 1850s in the period known as the *Zamana Masafent*. "Abyssinian Feudalism", pp. 124-5.

The same thesis runs like a thread through the writings of Merid Wolde Aregay. In addition to those cited in the bibliography, see his "Alula, Dogali and Ethiopian Unity", in Taddesse Beyene, Taddesse Tamrat and R. Pankhurst (eds.), *The Centenary of Dogali: Proceedings of the International Symposium Addis Ababa - Asmara January 24-25, 1987* (Addis Ababa, 1987) pp. 323-344. See also Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopian History, 1270-1527* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 90, 96-98.

It is worth noting in this context that almost all the major rebels against Tēwodros were, at one time or another, in his service. Tādla Gwalu, the Agāw brothers, and Amādē Bāšir saw service under him for a short while in his early years, but Wagšum Gobāzé and Kasa Merča had served him for several years before they rebelled.
21. Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections on the Power Elite of the Wārā Séh Māsēnate (1786-1853)", *Annales d'Ethiopie*, XV (forthcoming).
22. For Sahlā Selassé, see Bayru Tafla, pp. 532-533.
23. D. Crummey, "Imperial Legitimacy and the Creation of Neo-Solomonic Ideology in 19th Century Ethiopia", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaine* 209, XXVIII(1), (1988), p.16.
24. See also below, pp. 323-324.
25. For a study which focuses on kingship as an institution see LaVerle Berry, *The Solomonic Monarchy at Gondar, 1630-1755: an Institutional Analysis of Kingship in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia* (Ph. D. Thesis, Boston University, 1976).
26. See Mahtamā Selasé, *Zekrā Nāgār* (Addis Ababa, 1942, E.C.) for descriptions of these offices as they functioned in late 19th and early 20th centuries; for the earlier, Gondarine kingdom, see Bayru Tafla and H. Scholler (eds. and trans.) *Ser'ata Mangest: An Early Ethiopian Constitution* (Mimeo, Addis Ababa, 1974, available in the IES), pp. 28ff.
27. See Shiferaw, "Reflections..." for a brief description of functions. A governor was the commander of the provincial army, administrator and chief justice of the province and in overall charge of the affairs of churches in his domain. Ordinarily, he would occupy an office in the royal court in addition to his task of advising the king and sitting on the royal tribunal.

28. See Berry, for a discussion of the changing fortunes of the office of *Ras Bitwädäd* which changed, in the long run, in favour of the office itself, making it more and more powerful.
29. Historians have not so far recognised the significance of the royal council. The scholar who gives it some thought is Berry. See Berry, pp. 242ff. On the other hand, travellers do refer to a "council". Bruce gives a detailed description of this institution, including sitting arrangement and protocol of deliberation. He emphasises the fact that it was a viable and permanent central institution. See J. Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773* III, (Edinburgh, 1790), pp. 266-270, 275, 280. The order of precedence that he gives tallies with minor variations with the order given in the chronicles as well as in the *Ser'atä Mängest*. See I. Guidi, *Annales Iohannis I, Iyasu I, Bakäffä* (Paris, 1903), pp. 152, 313-314; Bairu and Scholler (eds.), *Ser'atä Mängest* pp.45-6. In the chronicle cited, there is an insistence that this institution was an age-old one.
30. In addition to the sources cited in 29 above, see B.G. Steffanson & R.K. Starret (eds.), *Documents on Ethiopian Politics: Vol. II - The Consolidation of Power of Haile Selassie, 1920-1929* (Salisbury, N.C., 1977), pp. 73-83. Southard, the U.S Minister in Addis Ababa in the late 1920s makes an effort to discuss the "Councils" at the time in the Court. He has drawn a diagram to illustrate his description. There were in 1928 three councils: The Secret Council, the Council of Ministers and the General Council. What he calls "General Council" corresponds to what I have described in this paper. But Southard's general description has to be taken with a great deal of caution because it betrays an ignorance of the continuity and mode of operation of institutions; see for example his despatches in pp. 85-91, 92.

An interesting minute of a "War Council" at Ba'etayo, not far from Maycaw following the defeat at the battle on 31.03.36 is given in Gäbrä Wäld Engeda Wärq, *Mayčaw: Yämayčaw Zämäčana Yägizew tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1947 E.C.), pp. 113-118. Gäbrä Wäld was the secretary of Emperor Haylä Sellasé and of the Council. What is very interesting to note is that, firstly, everybody in the meeting gave his opinion; and secondly, though the traditional order of precedence (from the lowest to the highest) was not strictly enforced, the last to speak were *Ras Getaččaw Abatä* and *Ras Kasa Haylu*, in that order. The Emperor then closed down the meeting with his final words. Thus, even in those most chaotic days, this institution seems to have been functional although not in its purest form.

31. F. Alvares (who stayed in Ethiopia from 1506 to 1520) has left us a description of the tribunal of the Chief Justice at the beginning of the 16th century which bears remarkable similarity with that of the 19th century. *The Prester John of the Indies* tr. C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 439-440. Bruce (Vol. III, pp. 282-283) describes the institution as it operated in mid-18th century. We are not ruling out changes in the history of the institution. What is being emphasised is the fact that in substance it exhibited remarkable continuity.

On the basis of local and foreign sources, Berry (pp. 244-245) attempts to reconstruct the administration of justice. He concludes that "matters of state, church and justice were all handled through discussion between kings and their retainers." (p.245) The chronicler of Bäkafa (1721-30) defined the objectives of the royal council as being for "judgement or council" I. Guidi, p.292 (text) and p. 313 (verso). His description of the royal tribunal (pp. 312-313 of verso) resembles the operations of the institution in late 19th and early 20th centuries. Sources for the latter see n.33 below.

32. I owe my first (even if not so systematic) introduction to this institution to three elders. *Ato* Haylä Maryam Yifat Wärq who worked as a scribe in the Ministry of Pen between 1919 and 1935; *Ato* Bäqälä Jima, who had several occasions to observe the imperial tribunal of Emperor Haylä Sellasé in session between the early 1950s and the late 1960s; and *Ato* Šifäraw Jima who worked in the *sera bet* (Kitchen departments) from the mid-40s to 88 in the *Gibbis* at Sidist Kilo and Arat Kilo. *Ato* Šifäraw Jima gave me a bottom-up view of this and of other aspects of court life.

33. The question of "fair trial" seems to have deep roots in the consciousness of Ethiopians of the past. It is worthy of note that Zär'a-Ya'eqob (1434-1468) was at one time confronted with charges by a monk called *Abba Täklä Hawaryat* that he tortured, jailed and killed many men *without fair trial*. Basing himself on a written tradition, Taddesse Tamrat writes,

when the king was told of this [charge] he angrily summoned the monk and said to him: 'Is it true that you insulted me? Whom did you see me kill *without legal proceedings* and whom did you see me punish *outside the law*?...' Takla-Hawaryat was himself beaten and cast into prison where he died some months later. (emphasis is mine) *Church and State in Ethiopia*, p.242.

It is remarkable that Zär'a-Ya'eqob emphasised the question of due process of law even if he did not care to respect it. The same question is raised in the case of Têwodros at the very outset of his reign in 1855 during his campaign in Šäwa. Two soldiers were charged with conspiring with 48 others to incite the army to mutiny against Têwodros. All of them were apprehended. He ruled, without any due process of the law, that 48 of them should be executed at Tora Mäsk in Šäwa while the two ring-leaders were to be taken to Gojjam, their home province, to be hanged after their four limbs were hacked off. *Abunä Salama* intervened, but to no avail. Wäldä Maryam, who informs us of this event, has also preserved the reactions of the Šäwans when the men were executed:

ይህንንም ያየ የሸዋ ሰው ሁሉ እጅግ ፈራ ተንቀጠቀጠ። የንጉሥ
አመደኛ ቢሞት ለሰዎች ቢሉ ከነጋሤ ጀምሮ እስከ ንጉሥ ኃይለ መለኮት
8 ትውልድ የበደለቸው ያስሩታል ይወርሱታል። ዐመፀኛ ነፍስ ገደይም
ቢገኝ በፍትሐ ነገሥት አስፈርደው ይገደሉታል እንጂ እንደዚህ የሆነ
ሞት ታይቶ አያውቅምና ስለዚህ ነው። (p, 14) (emphasis mine)

Mondon-Vidailhet translates it thus:

Les gens du Choa, témoins de ce qui se passait, furent pris de crainte et se mirent à trembler. Ils disaient:

- pourquoi un acte de désobéissance au roi est-il puni de mort? Depuis le temps de Nagasé jusqu'au temps de Hâyla-Malakot, pendant huit générations, ceux qui ont offensé le roi ont été enchainés; leurs biens ont été confisqués; lorsque l'un d'eux avait été convaincu d'homicide, ce n'était qu'après avoir été jugé selon le Fetha-Nagast qu'il était mis à mort.

Ils ne comprenaient pas, en effet, qu'on eut mis à mort, comme ils l'avait vu faire, des gens (coupables seulement d'un semblable delit, (p.17)

Heruy Wäldä Sellasé emphasised the same principle when he wrote about the trial of Bāzabeh ("governor" of Šäwa in the reign of Têwodros) before the tribunal presided by Menilek:

መኪንንቱና ሊቃውንቱም አቶ በዛብህ ገና ምላሽ ሳይሰጡ እየተነሱ
መፍረድ ጀመሩ። እንደህጉ ቢሆን በትልቁ ሰው በአቶ በዛብህ ይቅርና
በግንም ተራ ሰው እንኳ ቢሆን የሞት ፍርድ ሲፈረድ ለተከሰሰበት ወንጀል
ሁሉ ምላሽ ከሰጠና ካስረደ በኋላ ነበር። (emphasis mine)

Trans:

The *mākwanent* and *liqawent* started to give their judgment before Ato Bāzabeh defended himself [to the charges of lèse majesté]. If the law [or tradition] was implemented, a commoner let alone a lord like Ato Bāzabeh, would have been sentenced to death after he had defended himself against the charges brought before him.

There are several sources which give an account of the royal tribunal in session. See, for instance, Gäbrä Sellasé (Amh.), pp. 60-66, 198, 299-300. Käbbädä Tāssāma has devoted no less than four chapters to different sessions in the era of Tāfāri - Haylā Sellasé. See *Yā Tarik Māstawāša* (Addis Ababa, 1962 E.C.) pp. 69-92. It was a series of conspirators who were brought before the Court. A careful reading would also show how a capable leader would use the forum to advance his own position and political line so as to put those of his opponents in the worst possible lights.

34. It would perhaps be more fruitful to abstract the office from an individual governor. The office of the governor was at the apex of a host of institutions - administrative, military, judiciary and religious. It is therefore best viewed as a sub-system within the socio-political system. The residence of the governor was at the same time the locus of all these institutions.

When a governor rebelled and was deposed, one gets the impression from the sources that only an individual was overthrown. But this was wrong. One should always ask what happened to the many thousands who filled the institutions around the lord or who simply lived off him. Rulers such as Menilek with resources could transfer as many of a lord's retainers as possible to other provinces - e.g. Ras Zāwde's men, following the defeat of his rebellion, were taken to Wāllāga and were settled there in comfortable circumstances. See Kebede Kejela, "A Biography of *Dejazmach* Habte Mariam Gebregziabher", (B.A. thesis, AAU, April, 1989), p.64 n.65. Citing archival sources, Fekadu Begna shows that the retainers of Ayalew Beru, Ali Gäbrä Yās, Gäbrä Hiwāt Mika'él (lords of Semén and Wāllō) were regrouped upon their masters' death or disgrace, into an *anga* force (personal bodyguard) of the Crown Prince Asfa Wāssān after the liberation from Italian rule. They were then given *gala māret* as *madāreya*. Fekadu Begna, "The Wallo Territorial Army (1943-1974)", Paper read on the Fifth Seminar of the Department of History (Held in Debre Zeit from 30 June - 3 July, 1989), pp. 5-6.

The historian should therefore try to find out what Téwodros did to the many thousand followers of Ali II, Gošu, Beru, Webé, and the Aligaz brothers etc. So far, the published sources are not helpful; one has to look for other sources.

35. See note 20 above.
36. See also *supra*, pp. 292ff.
37. This approach is inspired by Milton Friedman, "Economists and Economic Policy", *Economic Impact* 57, 1, (1987), pp. 71-75 where he discusses briefly and lucidly the theory of public choice. The literature on this theory is growing. Anthony Downs, *The Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York, 1957) is one of the best introductions to the subject in spite of being a pioneer work.

Attempts have been made (e.g. Crummey, Ege) to deploy the Marxian concept of class in their studies of 19th century. Fruitful insights have been gained, but they stopped short of asking how the ruling elite maximized its self interests and what the "invisible hand" was that led individuals and social groups "to promote an end which was no part of [their] intention", in the words of Adam Smith, in their drive to maximize their interests. The theory of public choice could help yield fruitful results.

38. Merid Wolde Aregay, "Land Tenure and Agricultural Productivity, 1500-1850", *Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa, 1986), p.118.
 39. *Ibid.*, p.121.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism"; *idem.*, "Society and Ethnicity..."; A. Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia: the Dynamics of Cognatic Descent* (Chicago and London, 1973), pp. 5-8, *passim*; *idem.*, "Land Tenure and Social Mobility among the Damot Amhara", *Proceeding of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* Vol. III (Addis Ababa, 1970), pp. 69-88; Joanna Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure in the System of Ethiopian Imperial Government in Modern Times* (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 90-91, 109-111, *passim*. It should be pointed out that both Hoben and Mantel-Niecko recognize that the elite owned *rest* (though not in large estates) but only as members by blood of a peasant descent corporation. Besides, the two scholars also point out, members of the ruling class owned *rest* in large amounts in the southern provinces after the expansion of Menilek.
- Addis Hiwet maintained that "Abyssinian feudal aristocracy ... also had vast estates tilled by tenants" in addition to *gult*. He stresses the point by a repeater sentence that "the ruling houses of Gojjam, Tigray and Wello were great landholders in their respective areas." *Ethiopia: from Autocracy to Revolution* (London, 1975), pp. 29-30. However, because he has not documented this statement, Addis is not taken seriously on this issue.
42. As far back as 1891, Menilek issued an *awaj* in which he turned into *rest* all the *gaša märet*, from the borders with Wällo to the Awaš river. *Gaša Märet* was land given to soldiers, or, put another way, was land whose tribute obligation was military service (ገብረ ዘመቻ ነው). Moreover, Menilek abolished in the same *awaj* confiscation of land for breaches of the law and *lēse majesté*. Gäbrä Selasé (Amh.), p. 179.
 43. See G.W.B. Huntingford (ed.), *Land Charters of Northern Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1965). Charters 29, 32 and 47 were drawn up in the 16th century and give large estates as *rest* to individuals. For the use of the term *rest* in the original see p.17. Charters 11, 17a, 61, 62, grant extensive lands as *rest* to monasteries. There are also other charters which state that lands were given permanently. R. Pankhurst (*State and Land in Ethiopian History* Addis Ababa, 1966, pp. 32-34) not only uses these charters, but also cites grants of land to soldiers and nobles from chronicles of the early Solomonic. These grants resemble those of the later 19th century.
 44. See, for instance, R. Pankhurst "The Role of Women in Ethiopian Economic, Social and Cultural Life from the Middle Ages to the Time of Téwodros" Paper Read on the First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies, 11-12 April, 1990 (Addis Ababa), pp. 6, 9 who uses Orient 518, 529, 513, 518, 636 to demonstrate women's land ownership. For another detailed account of women's landownership based on these sources see Crummey, "Women and Landed Property in Gondarine Ethiopia", *International Journal of African Historical Studies* XIV, (1981), 445-65.
 45. A good number of manuscript marginalia and other documents from the 18th and 19th centuries are photographed from the important churches of the regions of Gondar and Gojjam by Crummey and a team of researchers in collaboration with the Department of History of Addis Ababa University. The project is funded by the National Endowment for Humanities (USA). In many of these documents, there are references to large *rest* holdings by individuals.
 46. Mantel-Niecko's discussion of *rest* (pp. 109-111) is the best to date. She correctly stresses inheritability and permanence. It follows from her definition that *rest* land, in the "Abyssinian" provinces, was not exclusive to the peasantry alone, though she does not state it openly. Hoben's definition, on the other hand, implies that the peasantry had *rest* rights over the land

while the lords depended predominantly on *gult* rights over the land. In view of the evidence cited in nos. 43, 44 and 45 above, perhaps a better definition of *rest* would be one that emphasizes ownership regardless of class.

47. The most underemphasized aspect of *rest* land was its conditionality. *Rest* form of ownership was not absolute ownership. There was always one or another obligation attached to *rest*. Fulfillment of this obligation was mandatory for continued ownership. For instance, a particular *rest* land could have obligations of supporting a church in the form of tribute. Hoben gives a very good description of how peasants who owned this kind of *rest* fulfilled their obligations of supporting the church. See *The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam Amhara Social Organisations*, (Ph.D. thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1963), pp. 82-102.

The other major condition that would be attached to *rest* was tributary service. The *restenña* in this case had to give military service. This was variously called *Yāzamaṣ mārēt* or *Yāgaša mārēt* or *gāndābāl mārēt* or *Yāgalla Mārēt* or some such term depending on the region. The *rest* of the lords could belong to either one of these two categories. Lords just as much as peasants could own *rest* which was *gābar mārēt*. While the peasants fulfilled their well-known *gābar* obligations themselves, the lord would send his proxies. Failure to fulfill any one of these obligations would result in confiscation.

Thus a key feature of *rest* form of ownership was its conditionality. What we see since the end of the 19th century was a process of abolishing the conditions. Perhaps one of the first measures in this regard was the *awaj* of Menilek of 1891 cited above in which he abolished confiscation of land for crimes like homicide and *lèse majesté*. In 1907, 1928 and in the constitution of 1931 a series of decrees were issued which were intended to absolutise *rest* form of ownership of land. In 1941 Haylā Sellasé issued his first *awaj* in which he abolished military and other obligations attached to various kinds of *rest* lands. The institution of *gābar mārēt* was abolished in article 4 of *awaj* no. 70 of 1944. See Gäbrä Wäld, pp. 73-4, 101-104 for these *awajs*. The *gābar* obligations attached to *gābar mārēt* were annulled and in their place the owner (peasant or lord) would pay his taxes in cash.

Thus the series of land decrees issued since 1891 through to the 1940s, which were, *inter alia*, intended to absolutise *rest* form of ownership, confirm in a rather backhanded way the conditional nature of *rest* ownership of land.

48. These were estates or districts called *madbēt* or *ganāgāb* in many parts of the empire since the 19th century. For the Gondarine era, the districts of Dāmbeya and Yebaba were set aside for a similar purpose. These estates were not the same as *gults*. That *gults* were the lowest administrative units, there is consensus among Hoben, Berhanou, and Mantel-Niecko. A work by Pollera based on several decades of observation defines *gult* as the lowest administrative unit in Eritrea and Tegray. Empirical evidence collected from Northern Wällo and Gojjam supports the same conclusion. To "give" a *gult* to someone, therefore, meant to appoint him as a governor of the lowest administrative unit which, of course, granted the appointee the right to a portion of the tribute expressed in the Amharic dictum of the late 19th and early 20th centuries - ገረገ ይጠጣ - literally, "he drinks the honey" but which meant he collects tribute which was in the form of honey in many areas. For this reason, from the emperor, the Etege, the princesses and big lords of the Court all the way down to a *māto alāqa*, they were given *gults* in order to augment their revenues.

Land, sometimes in enormous quantities, was given to individuals for temporary use as well as permanently (as *rest*) by the State. In the first half of the 16th century, there is evidence to show that Robēl, the famous Tigrean lord, was given enormous amounts of land as *rest*. There were also others in the same era. See n.43 above. On the basis of a *māzgāb* (register) which Shumat Sishagne and he unearthed in Gondār, Crummey shows that in the middle of the 18th century a good many lords and ladies were given many *gaṣas* of land. See Crummey and Shumat Sishagne, "Land Tenure and the Social Accumulation of Wealth in Eighteenth Century Ethiopia: Evidence from the Qwesqam Land Register", a paper prepared for the Symposium

on Land in Agrarian Societies (Urbana, April 1989). Thus, notwithstanding the views of Crumme, this accumulation of land was not an innovation of the Gondarine kingdom. For the 19th and early 20th centuries, the evidence is plenty.

This grant did not bestow administrative, tributary and judiciary privileges on the grantees. The best known form of land grant of this type was *madäriya märet* - whatever the size, even sometimes being far larger than a *gult* - was not at all the same as granting *gult*. More often than not, however, there is a confusion of the two concepts in the scholarly literature.

There is, therefore, as much need for devising new concepts and models as there is for empirical investigation at the grass roots level. It is not always possible to perceive reality correctly without the aid of theoretical principles of categorization.

49. See entries under the various titles in Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge'ez-English English-Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden, 1987); Dästa Täklä Wäld, *Addis YäAmareñña Mäzgäbä Qalat* (Addis Ababa, 1951 E.C.); Täsäma Habtä Mika'el, *Yä Amareñña Mäzgäbä Qalat* (Addis Ababa, 1951 E.), J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire amarigna-français* (Dire Dawa, 1929); I. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano* (Roma, 1901).
 50. For a study predicated on the theory of patron-client and drawing upon the works of Ethnologist anthropologists see Berry, *op. cit.*
 51. See Mahtämä-Selasé, pp. 654-6.
 52. See for well-documented arguments: Crumme, "Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", in S. Rubenson (ed.) *Proceedings*, pp. 263-277; R. Caulk, "Bad Men of the Borders: *Shum* and *Shifta* in Northern Ethiopia in the Nineteenth Century", *Proceedings of the Second Annual Seminar of the Department of History of AAU, Vol. I*, (Addis Ababa, 1984), pp. 39-104; T. Fernyhough, "Social Mobility and Dissident Elites in Northern Ethiopia: the Role of Banditry, 1900-69" in D. Crumme (ed.), *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa* (London, 1986), pp. 151-172.
- Täklä Sadiq explains many political crisis from the 16th to the 19th centuries in terms outlined in this essay in his *KäAsé Lebnä Dengel eskä Asé Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa, rep. 1961), *passim*.
53. Mahtämä Selasé, pp. 653-4. "On the basis of a tradition that has come from antiquity to the present, the emperor of Ethiopia gave titles from *balambaras* to *ras* only to those he could give provinces to govern in lieu of salary ... To appoint someone not as a *mesläne* but as a governor over a province meant to reallocate to him tributes and other resources due to the State so as to enable him to maintain the army and retainers under him."
 54. *Ibid.* "It is said that Asé Tēwodros had declared all the country to be in his hands [lit. "I will personally govern all the provinces"]; and hence he gave titles on salary alone [did not give provinces]."
 55. Heruy Wäldä Sellasé, p.38. "[Tēwodros] declared that the country would be in his hands and maintained the *mākwānent* and the soldiery by provisions [or by salary]."
 56. Gäbrä Heywät, p.343. It is highly probable that Gäbrä Heywät's source was European rather than Ethiopian. "That Qwarāña king unified by his powerful sword all the fragmented provinces of the Abyssinian kingdom. In order to liberate the masses from the yoke of the clergy and the nobility, he declared *agär bājé* [the country will be in my hands]. He struggled to introduce [modern] education. O Reader, what do you think he got out of [benefited from] this effort? The entire people, the clergy and the nobility conspired against him. They drove him crazy. At last they handed him over to an enemy. And he killed himself..."

57. Rubenson, "King of Kings", p. 53.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
60. Zänäb, pp. 33, 37, 41; Wäldä Maryam, pp. 51, 52.
61. "A Collection of folk poetry from Gojam". A manuscript prepared by Däjazmač Kābādä Tässäma, p.17. I am grateful to Dr. Kenāfä Regeb Zälläqä (formerly of the IES) for giving me access to the ms. which is in his possession.
62. Bairu, pp. 572-3.
63. See entries under *mesläné* in the dictionaries cited in n.49 above.
64. See entries under *endärasé* in the dictionaries cited in n.49 above.
65. Crummey, "The Violence..." pp. 112, 116.
66. The title of *māred azmač* was lower than that of *negus*.
67. Perham, pp. 71-72; Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia* (London, 1682), p. 198.
68. See *supra*, pp. 47-48; Crummey, "Imperial Legitimacy...", p.16.
69. See *supra*, pp. 296-297.
70. Crummey, "The Violence...", pp. 114-5.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.
72. Institutions were not as formalised in that system as they are today. But lords normally headed an institution though they tended to be regarded as mere individuals.
73. See Täklä Ṣadiq, *Téwodros ena Yälyopya Andenät*, pp. 503-509. R.K. Pankhurst (ed. and trans. in collaboration with Girma-Selassie Asfaw, *Tax Records of Emperor Téwodros of Ethiopia (1855-1868)* (London, 1978), p. 22 n.92, p. 113, nn. 12, 15, 16, pp. 145-6 nn. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 26 for very brief vignettes of the courtiers of Téwodros. Rassam gives interesting character sketches of some of these men in his *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore* Vol. II (London, 1869), pp. 167-186.
74. See note 61 above.
75. The sources cited in 73 above as well as Zänäb, Wäldä Maryam and the anonymous chronicler are helpful.
76. R.K. Pankhurst (ed.), *Tax Records and Inventories*, pp. 145-6 n.2; Täklä Ṣadiq, *Téwodros ena Yälyopya Andenät*, p. 504.
77. See *Ibid.* pp. 503-505; R. K. Pankhurst (ed.), *Tax Records and Inventories* p. 113 n. 13 writes that this title was "toward the end of Tewodros's reign much debased."
78. Täklä Ṣadiq, *Téwodros ena Yälyopya Andenät* pp. 505-509. His very close courtiers, Alämé, Gälmo and Gäbriyé, did not seem to have grown into governors of independent standing.

79. In addition to the two chroniclers, one can cite other sources. For example, Rassam gives accounts of "trials" he witnessed. In these accounts we see neither the *liqawent* nor the *mākewant* giving their opinions. It was only Tēwodros whom we see doing the interrogation and delivering the judgement. The accused were not allowed to argue out their cases and call witnesses. See Rassam, Vol. II, pp. 94-96, 104-6, 148-9. Stern also reports executions of Wagšum Tāfāri and of others without trial. See *The Captive Missionary: Being an Account of the Country and Its Various Inhabitants* (London, 1868), pp. 25, 28.

Execution of big lords on account of rebellions in accordance with the provisions of the *Fetha Nāgāst* seems to have relapsed in the *Zāmānā Māsafent*. Tēwodros revived it without, however, fully reviving the institution of the royal tribunal.

80. Rassam, among others, comments that Tēwodros "was not a man to listen to advice." (II, 104). For a very telling tradition regarding execution without trial under Tēwodros see Wāldā Maryām, p. 14. It is quoted in n. 33 above.
81. See n. 33 above for reference to the period of Menilek.
82. For the career of Alula see H. Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea during the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography of Ras Alula, 1875-1897* (East Lansing, 1982); *idem*, "A Contemporary Biography of Ras Alulā: a Ge'ez manuscript from Manawe, Tamben", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1976).
83. Erlich seems to regard the title of *Turk Baša* only as an honorific one though he concedes that it was "revived" in the reign of Yohannes. For him the appointment of Alula to *turk baša* in addition to his *ras*-ship was "to emphasise Alula's superior position at court", and the young *ras* too "did his best to emphasise it as a sign of his superiority over other *rases*." *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p. 19. But to my mind, this is to miss the full significance of the title of *turk baša*.

Both Heruy Wāldā Selassé (*Yā Heywāt Tarik*, p. 37) and Mahtāmā Selasse refer to *Turk Baša* Tamre as "የኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ጠቅላይ አዛዥ" (Commander-in-Chief of the army of Menilek). Mahtāmā Selasé Wāldā Māsqa, "Yāltiyopya Bahel Tenat (Čé bālāw)", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 1969, VII, p. 237. Dāsta Tāklā Wāld (entry under *Turk baša*, p. 126b) in his dictionary states that this title had become a court title and cites, as example, *Turk baša* Tamre, whom he said, was the "gaša jagrē" of Menilek. Kasatē Berhan Tāssāina (entry, on p. 62) defines it as a military title. For references to the use of the term *Turk Baša* in earlier times see R. Pankhurst, "The History of Fire-arms in Ethiopia prior to the Nineteenth Century", *Ethiopia Observer* XI, No. 3, (1967), pp., 202-25.

In Ar. d'Abbadie's detailed description of the structure of Gošu Zāwdé's Court figures "le Moulla-Bet-Bacha" - an officer who was "commandant en chef des corps de francs-tireurs ou fusiliers", *Douze Ans de Séjour*, p. 355. Hence, this officer was a court official.

It is therefore possible to argue that *turk baša* was a court officer directly under Yohannes himself. It seems proper to give this title to Alula because he was a *šālāqa* in the Court until he was raised to *ras* on 9 October 1876. (Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p.13). The title of *turk baša* was added to him only a few months later in early 1877(!) which could mean that Yohannes wanted him to be in charge of the guards corps equipped with artillery and rifle in his court as well as to play the role of a commander of the generals during campaigns.

In short, Alula occupied provincial and court offices at one and the same time.

84. For very short profiles and vignettes of these lords, see Bayru Tafla (ed.), *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-89)* (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 43 n. 46, 63 n. 76, 73 n. 95, 93 n. 135, 103 n. 161, 119 n. 198, 133 n. 231.; Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 272-292 and also pp. 170-171.

85. See n. 84 above. His chronicler informs us that Yohannes instituted that "... Whenever [he] sat at the Court of Justice, Menilek sat to his right... And this King of Gwaggam and Kafa (Takla Haymanot) sat to his left..." Bairu, *A Chronicle*, pp. 153-5.
86. See n. 84 above.
87. See e.g. Rassam, Vol. II, pp. 93-4 where Téwodros tries to prove his noble lineage.
88. S. Rubenson, Getachew Haile and J. Hunwick (eds.), *Acta Aethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties, 1800-1854* (Evanston and Addis Ababa, 1987), p. 13.
89. Fusella, p. 73.
90. Mengestu Lemma, *Mä'sehafä Tezeta Zä Aläqa Lämna Haylu Wäldä Tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1959 E.C.), p.85.
91. Girma-Selassie Asfaw, D. Appleyard and E. Ullendorff (eds.), *The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and Her Special Envoy* (London, 1979), pp. 3^a-3^d. "Because my fathers, the kings, sinned against God, he gave their kingdom to the Turks and the Oromo. But today, My Creator raised me from the dust, gave me power and put me on the throne of my fathers."
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 5^a-5^d.
93. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.17. It should, however, be pointed out that in his paper published in this book, Rubenson corrects this interpretation. See p. 18-19 above.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.
95. Crummey, "Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", in S. Rubenson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*.
96. See Crummey, "The Violence"; *Idem*, "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer," *Journal of African History*, X, 3 (1969); *idem*, "Orthodoxy and Imperial Reconstruction in Ethiopia, 1854-1878", *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. 5 XXIX, 2, (1978).
97. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, pp. 49-52.
98. See Zänäb, Wäldä Maryam, Fusella, Bairu.
99. Zänäb, p.5.
100. See also *idem*, "Millenarian Traditions and Peasant Movements in Ethiopia, 1500-1855", in S. Rubenson *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*.
101. R. Caulk, "Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* X, 1, (1972); Gäbrä Medhin Kidane, *Yohannes IV: Religious Aspects of his Internal Policy*, (B.A. thesis, HSIU, 1972); Seltene Seyoum, *Yohannes IV: Rise and Consolidation* (B.A. thesis, HSIU, 1972); Hussein Ahmed, *Clerics, Traders and Chiefs: A Historical Study of Islam in Wallo (Ethiopia) with special emphasis on the Nineteenth Century*, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1985); *Idem*, "The Life and Career of Shaykh Taiha b. Ja'afar (c. 1853-1936)", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XXII (1989).
102. Quoted in Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.54.

ያን ገዢው ሰውን መቀጠር ጀመሩ። የሺ አለቃ የመቶ አለቃ የአምሳ አለቃ ያሥር አለቃ እያደረጉ ሸመ። የሺውን አለቃ አምበላ አለቃ ሰውን ከዚያ ወደያ አንኮበር ወረደ። Zanab, pp. 24-25

Trans: At that time, he counted the men. He appointed Yāšālāqa, Yāmātoalāqā, YāAmsaAlāqā, Yaserālāqā. He called the Yāšālāqā ambāl. Then he went down to Ankobār.

Soon after this, there was an attempt at agitating the army to mutiny which both Zānāb (pp. 25-6) and Wāldā Maryam (pp. 13-14) describe at some length. Presumably, the soldiers were tired after such a long campaign. Could there be a connection between the restructuring and the anti-Tēwodros agitation? The context suggests so, at any rate.

104. R. Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power in Ethiopia in Nineteenth Century", *Journal of African History* XXIII, No. 4, (1972), p. 610.

105. See e.g., Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 364: "Ethiopia's peasant warriors were in theory as many as her able-bodied men." On the basis of a circumspect study of his works, D. Chapple concludes that "Rubenson is thinking in terms of *lèves en masse*, farmers converted into soldiers for the moment of national crisis and presumably becoming farmers again on their return from campaign." "Warfare in the Reign of Yohannes - Three Northern Battles: Assem, Gundet and Gura", paper read on the Fifth Departmental Seminar of the Department of History (Held in Debre Zeit, June 30-3 July, 1989), p.30.

Richard Caulk, citing authorities in "medieval" history, contends that there were important changes in the system of military organisation from the 16th century onward. Up to the civil wars of *Imam Ahmād* (commonly nicknamed *Grañ*),

farmers, (*geberé*, sing.) were not usually allowed to bear arms. They paid tribute (*gibir*) and were not considered free men, the word for soldier (*hara*) having that connotation. Specific groups of the emperor's taxpayers (*gebbar*, sing.) were assigned to regiments to supply portage, pasture, pack animals, care for tents, and help with victualing. Taxes in kind as well as plunder paid for the regular army's upkeep. "Armies as Predators: Soldiers and Peasants in Ethiopia, 1850-1935", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XI, No. 3, (1978), p. 460.

Surely, Tadesse Tamrat who is cited, does not fully support this picture because he writes that, in addition to the regular army, "in times of national or local crises, the monarch raised a huge local militia, from the Christian provinces." *Church and State*, p. 90. In other words, a form of *levée en masse* is applied. The issue calls for a more in-depth investigation not least because the sources for the 18th and 19th centuries do not refer to *levée en masse*. Rather, mobilization was structural and directly linked to land tenure. See p.313 below and n. 116. Besides, this leads us to question the changes that Caulk perceives for the post-16th century eras:

By the time the Emperor Susenyos (1610 [sic.] - 1632) came to the throne, Christian peasants had taken up arms both against the animist Oromo and against their rulers' marauding soldiers. Thus, it was decreed that all were free men (*hara*, soldier) and the cultivated land itself owed tribute (*gibir*). Thereafter, the armed peasantry of the Christian empire was liable to military service and might be summoned to fill out the ranks of the full-time professional soldiers

who followed year-round the emperor or one of his lords. "Armies as Predators", p. 461.

It can therefore be concluded that the theory of *levée en masse* enjoys currency among the authorities in the field.

106. See the Chapter entitled "Maison militaire et civile d'un Dedjazmatch" in Ar. d'Abbadie, *Douze Ans*, I, pp. 327-379. On the question of military organization see, *inter alia*, Fantahun Berhane, "Gojjam, 1800-1855" (B.A. thesis H.S.I.U., 1973), pp. 43-63; S. Ege, "Chiefs and Peasants. The Socio-Political Structure of the Kingdom of Shawa in about 1840", (*Horedoppgani i Historia*, University of Bergen, 1978); the chapter on the army in R.K. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa, 1968); R. Caulk, "Armies as Predators: Soldiers and Peasants in Ethiopia, c. 1850-1935", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XI no. 3, (1978), pp. 457-493; Merid Wolde Aregay, *Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom, 1508-1708 with special Reference to the Galla Migration and their Consequences* (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1971); Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy", pp. 251-263.
 107. T. Lefebvre and others, *Voyage en Abyssinie exécuté pendant les années 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843* (Paris, 1845-51), pp. xliiff.
 108. Plowden, pp. 45-83.
 109. Bairu, *Aṣma Giyorgis*, pp. 139-41, 503, 533, 771 and *passim*.
 110. Täklä Iyäsus, "Yä Gojjam Tarik" (IES MS no. 254), *passim*.
 111. Ar. d'Abbadie, I, pp. 327-379, gives detailed descriptions of numerical strengths and functions of military units for the army of Goṣu Zäwdé of Gojjam. Mahtämä Sellasé, *Zekrä Nägär* (pp. 30-68, 228-269) does the same for the army of Menilek. In the past, there were famous regiments like *Qäṣṭä Nehb*, *Afro Aygäba*, *Aqet Zar* and countless others. Regiments exhibited esprit de corps and inter-generational continuity.
 112. The full-time soldier was a visible component of rural society. It was the same full-time soldier who is constantly referred to in chronicles and traveller's accounts. When Plowden (and others) divided the society into segments, one of them was always the soldier. See Plowden, p. 45. See again, Plowden (pp. 45-83) for a good description of the costume, the *mentalité* and way of life of the soldier whether full-time or part-time. For a short description of the place of a "farmer-soldier" in Lasta rural community, see McCann, pp. 43 ff.
 113. In books that described titles and functions of officials, they are invariably presented in a dichotomy: civilian and military. Even Ethiopians who had an authoritative knowledge of the traditional system (e.g. Mahtämä Sellasé, *Zekrä Nägär*, pp. 659-668) follow the same pattern. But this is misleading, unless qualified. All those in State service from the lowest (*gultäña/mälkäña* and the lowest servant in the *ghibbis* of the lords) to the highest (judges, treasurers) were under obligation to give military service during campaigns. This is, i.e., evidenced in the chapter already cited of Ar. d'Abbadie and the first chapter of *Zekrä Nägär* (and *passim*). For instance, the *bäjerond* as well as the *blatängéta* or the *azaj* (i.e. heads of household departments), were at the same time commanders of important detachments. In Goṣu's army, the *bäjerond* was a *ṣaläqa*, and one of Menilek's *bäjeronds*, Balca, attained fame as a major commander.
- The dichotomy, therefore, applies only to peaceful times when some were engaged in soldiering and others in civilian tasks.
114. That this was the pattern of organisation throughout the Wära Séh Mäsfenat could be seen from Plowden, Ar. d'Abbadie, Lefebvre, Pearce, etc.

The title of *šalāqa* seems to have had various functions and grades. In the court at Gondār and later in the court of Gošu, the *šalāqa* was a regimental commander of household detachments. In the list of precedence of officials the *šalāqa* was the lowest officer below even a *baša*. I Guidi, *Annales Hyäsu I*, p. 313. See H. Weld Blundell (ed.), *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1849* (Cambridge, 1922), *passim* for the later Gondarine era; and also Ar. d'Abbadie, pp. 327-379, for the court of Gošu. D'Abbadie lists, for example, *Zufan-bet šalāqa*, *Färäs-Zäbāna šalāqa*; the *bäjerond* was also a *šalāqa*.

The *šalāqa* continues as a household commander through to the Menilek period. See *Zekrä Nägär*, pp. 30-60, 661-664. But in this era in addition to the *šalāqa* being a junior officer the principal governors were also identified as *šalāqa*, i.e. the title of *šalāqa* rose to that of general of an army. The *šalāqa* continued to occupy varying offices in the hierarchy right up to the 1935/36 war.

The army had well-established military decorations and insignias of rank. The highest decoration at one time was called *biāwa* which was at the time of Isenberg (1830s), "a broad bracelet of gold for rich, of silver for poor warriors, who have killed ten enemies." The other decorations - lower than *biāwa* - were *malāya*, *Yäbora* and *Čufa*. C. Isenberg, *Dictionary of the Amharic Language in Two Parts: Amharic-English English-Amharic* (London, 1841), pp. 90b for more or less similar definitions.

These decorations seem, however, to have fallen into disuse in the latter part of the reign of Menilek.

115. See n.105 above. The theory of *levée en masse* is used to explain significant events in 19th century history. For instance, Rubenson explains the failure of Yohannes to follow up the victory of Gura mainly by this factor. His army had to be disbanded for agricultural chores as it was an "ad hoc" army. *Survival*, p. 333.
116. See Shiferaw, "Reflections ..." for analysis and references. See also J. McCann, p. 46 for a documented description of "farmer-soldiers" in Lasta which fits my description. The conventional picture that the scholarly literature gives us is of a homogenous peasantry which was *gäbar*. But this is wrong. The peasantry was rather heterogeneous: those who owned *rest* with tribute obligations to the Church were not *gäbar*, in the strict sense of the term. Neither were the peasants *gäbar* who owned *rest* which had military obligations in lieu of tributes built into the land. The picture was normally much more complicated than even this because a single peasant could own *rest* of several statuses (*sämon*, *zämäčä*, *gäbär*, *yäfaräs* etc.) due to inheritance or of purchase or of mortgage which made him, in a way, a "priest", a "soldier", a "cavalry soldier", a "gäbar" at one and the same time. This system obtained in the *Zämänä Mäsaferet* and continued through to the 1935/36 war. Haylä Selassé abolished it in his *awajs* of 1941 and 1944. See Gäbrä Wäld, pp. 73-4, 101-104 for the texts of these *awajs*.
117. *Fana wagi* was a detachment in charge of lighting the royal chambers.
118. These units were variously called: *gendäbäl* (Šäwa), and *čäni* (Bagemder etc. in the late 18th century).
119. See for documentation Shiferaw, "Reflections..."
120. Caulk, "Firearms...", p. 814.
121. Pankhurst, *Economic History*, p.561.
122. *King of Kings*, p.54.
123. As more and more documents are unearthed, it can be seen that there was a greater circulation of Maria Theresa thalers than heretofore assumed. See the writings of D. Crumme; Pankhurst

(ed.), *Tax Records, passim*; the marginalia photographed by Crummey and his team of researchers contain numerous land sales. One has to hold's one breath until the appearance of Crummey's study on this and other issues related to land.

124. The "accounting system" of the mid-19th century as revealed in Téwodros's register (see Pankhurst, *Tax Records*) is rather crude.
125. See notes 53-56 *supra*.
126. Saalmüller, a Protestant missionary who resided near the court of Téwodros in 1860/61, relates that in 1860 Téwodros returned from his campaign in Tegray without victory and "with a tired, and hungry army...". The exhausted peasants were not willing to pay tribute. And on top of it,

his army demanded more strongly its wages, and there was no money. This disappointment of his army placed him in danger, for the army might run away from him to join sides with his enemies who surrounded him everywhere... He became furious, especially about the spiritual class which holds the greatest part of the land, and from which the King can neither draw taxes nor upon which he even once quarter his troops. ...Consequently at that time of financial difficulties, the King broke into a terrible rage against the class concerned and took away from them all church possessions. Certain distinguished members of this class lodged protests over the King's proceedings; however, they received satisfaction with a good dose of whip lashings ... His troops he quartered on the lands in question...

But, finally, when Téwodros realized that "the moment was not opportune for such a bold stroke [he] returned all the lands." From a letter dated Gafat, January 13, 1861 available in *Staatsarchiv des Kantons Basel Stadt, C.F. Spüller Privat-Archiv 653. D3/9*. I owe my knowledge of this letter entirely to a handout in which a translation is attached prepared for a Course on Ethiopian History from the 16th century to 1855 (Hist. 301) in the Department of History (AAU).

127. See entries under *qälāb* and *dāmawāz* in Guidi, p. 240b; Isenberg, pp. 69a, 163a; Kasaté Berhan Tässäma, p. 349.
128. The French scientific mission headed by T. Lefebvre made enquiries regarding the nature of military organization in the *Zāmānā Māsafent*. They give in their book a brief but interesting description of the system I, xlii-iii). They state that, in addition to soldiers who could be raised from every village, there were professional soldiers who offered their services to whoever paid well. In any case "le noveau d'une armée, ce qui fait surtout la force d'un chef, parce qu'il y trouve un point d'appui pour maintenir sa suprématie sur ses subordonnées c'est un certain nombre des divisions par des creatures à lui, qui font partie de sa maison, et sont toujours sous ses yeux. Ces divisions s'appellent *ichefra*. Les soldats qui les composent reçoivent leur paie du général même..."

Lefebvre and the mission point out that in that era there was no problem of recruiting soldiers. In fact, every lord "est assailli de gens qui demandent à prendre du service..." Then the authors discuss pay: "la solde d'un simple soldat ne dépasse guère la valeur de 25 francs par an; on le nourrit en lui assignant sur un district un certain nombre de mesures de grain qu'il va prélever lui-même..." Lefebvre, I, Xlii-Xliv.

In his description of the court of Gošu, to which reference has already been made, Ar. d'Abbadie also writes of soldiers who were given provisions for their maintenance. See I, 369, 327-379. The anonymous chronicler refers to the *qālbānā* force of Ras Ali. Fusella, p. 73. Plowden's description also points to the same social segment. "The Ras [Ali II] reserves for

himself a number of provinces to provide for his household officers and troops. The soldiers are paid an uncertain amount of money occasionally, and have a monthly allowance of corn." "Report" dated 9 July 1854 in FOR.401 I no. 205 (British Foreign Office). I saw a copy of this document in the handout described in n.127 above. For the same situation in Šäwa of the 1830s and 1840s, see Ege (pp. 182-8) who has carefully collected travellers accounts.

Because there were a large number of soldiers of this type, courts at times ran out of rations and consequently hunger would break out not infrequently in the courts of Ali II, Webé and Beru Gošu. The lords characteristically reacted by letting their soldiers plunder the peasantry. See, for accounts of starvation and subsequent plundering rampages, Plowden, pp. 228, 421-3; E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie dans le pays Galla, de Choa et d'Ifat*, (Paris, 1838), I, pp. 239, 253.

129. Crummey has collated all the available sources and established the frequent *sirri* (quartering) of soldiers over the Dämbiya-Wadla axis. In fact, he makes a case of the burden of this practice on the peasantry and attempts to establish a link between this practice and the widespread peasant rebellions that wrecked the last years of Téwodros. See "Cäcäho and the Politics of the Northern Wallo-Bagemder Border", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XIII, No. 1, 1975; *idem.*, "Banditry and Resistance..."
130. See Crummey, "Orthodoxy"; *idem.*, "Doctrine and Authority: Abuna Salama, 1841-1854", IV *Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici I* (Roma, 1970). See also n. 101 above for additional references.
131. Crummey, "Orthodoxy", p.429.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 432.
133. *Idem.*, "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer", pp. 58-9.
134. *Ibid.* Though this argument has acquired the status of received wisdom, it has yet to take into account the fact that even if doctrinal uniformity was established, it would not necessarily lead to national unity and consolidation of the monarchy because of a structural factor. Provincial lords had acquired as a result of the transformations in the anatomy of the State in the last quarter of the 18th century, complete authority over the churches of their domain. They were the ones who appointed and demoted abbots, gave land and in other ways sustained the Church. Thus, they could use the provincial Church to promote their own political ends regardless of doctrine. *Aläqa Lämna* recounts an interesting tradition to the effect that the rector of Dima Giyorgis (Gojjam) gave his blessings in July 1853 a little before Ayšal to both Ali II and Kassa at short intervals. And he justified his somersault on grounds of rank opportunism. *Mäšehafä Tezeta*, pp. 83-85.
135. See nn. 101 and 130 *supra* for the references.
136. For a full citation of the authorities see Shiferaw Bekele "Prayers and Rulers in Ethiopian History: Notes for a Structural History of the Solomonic State" (forthcoming).
137. *Ibid.*
138. "Orthodoxy", pp. 439-5.
139. *Ibid.*, pp. 432ff.
140. Clerical informants in Gondär still remember with a great deal of feeling the land policies of Téwodros. I heard this a couple of years ago from Professor Crummey and Ato Shumet Sishagne who had carried out research in the churches of the region, and from Ato Asnake Ali, instructor in the College of Teacher Education (AA), a native of Gondär.

79. In addition to the two chroniclers, one can cite other sources. For example, Rassam gives accounts of "trials" he witnessed. In these accounts we see neither the *liqawent* nor the *mākwawent* giving their opinions. It was only Tēwodros whom we see doing the interrogation and delivering the judgement. The accused were not allowed to argue out their cases and call witnesses. See Rassam, Vol. II, pp. 94-96, 104-6, 148-9. Stern also reports executions of Wagšum Tāfāri and of others without trial. See *The Captive Missionary: Being an Account of the Country and Its Various Inhabitants* (London, 1868), pp. 25, 28.

Execution of big lords on account of rebellions in accordance with the provisions of the *Fetha Nāgāst* seems to have relapsed in the *Zāmānā Māsāfent*. Tēwodros revived it without, however, fully reviving the institution of the royal tribunal.

80. Rassam, among others, comments that Tēwodros "was not a man to listen to advice." (II, 104). For a very telling tradition regarding execution without trial under Tēwodros see Wāldā Maryam, p. 14. It is quoted in n. 33 above.
81. See n. 33 above for reference to the period of Menilek.
82. For the career of Alula see H. Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea during the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography of Ras Alula, 1875-1897* (East Lansing, 1982); *idem*, "A Contemporary Biography of Ras Alulā: a Ge'ez manuscript from Manawe, Tamben", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1976).
83. Erlich seems to regard the title of *Turk Baša* only as an honorific one though he concedes that it was "revived" in the reign of Yohannes. For him the appointment of Alula to *turk baša* in addition to his *ras*-ship was "to emphasise Alula's superior position at court", and the young *ras* too "did his best to emphasise it as a sign of his superiority over other *rases*." *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p. 19. But to my mind, this is to miss the full significance of the title of *turk baša*.

Both Heruy Wāldā Selassé (*Yā Heywāt Tarik*, p. 37) and Mahtāmā Selasse refer to *Turk Baša Tamre* as "የኢሉ ፓላህ ጠቅላይ ለዘዥ" (Commander-in-Chief of the army of Menilek). Mahtāmā Selasé Wāldā Māsāqāl, "Yāltiyopya Bahel Tenat (Čē bālāw)", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 1969, VII, p. 237. Dāsta Tāklā Wāld (entry under *Turk baša*, p. 126b) in his dictionary states that this title had become a court title and cites, as example, *Turk baša Tamre*, whom he said, was the "gaša jagrē" of Menilek. Kasatē Berhan Tāssāina (entry, on p. 62) defines it as a military title. For references to the use of the term *Turk Baša* in earlier times see R. Pankhurst, "The History of Fire-arms in Ethiopia prior to the Nineteenth Century", *Ethiopia Observer* XI, No. 3, (1967), pp. 202-25.

In Ar. d'Abbadie's detailed description of the structure of Gošu Zāwdé's Court figures "le Moulla-Bet-Bacha" - an officer who was "commandant en chef des corps de francs-tireurs ou fusiliers", *Douze Ans de Séjour*, p. 355. Hence, this officer was a court official.

It is therefore possible to argue that *turk baša* was a court officer directly under Yohannes himself. It seems proper to give this title to Alula because he was a *šālāqa* in the Court until he was raised to *ras* on 9 October 1876. (Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p.13). The title of *turk baša* was added to him only a few months later in early 1877(!) which could mean that Yohannes wanted him to be in charge of the guards corps equipped with artillery and rifle in his court as well as to play the role of a commander of the generals during campaigns.

In short, Alula occupied provincial and court offices at one and the same time.

84. For very short profiles and vignettes of these lords, see Bayru Tafla (ed.), *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-89)* (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 43 n. 46, 63 n. 76, 73 n. 95, 93 n. 135, 103 n. 161, 119 n. 198, 133 n. 231.; Zewde Gabre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 272-292 and also pp. 170-171.

85. See n. 84 above. His chronicler informs us that Yohannes instituted that "... Whenever [he] sat at the Court of Justice, Menilek sat to his right... And this King of Gwaggam and Kafa (Takla Haymanot) sat to his left..." Bairu, *A Chronicle*, pp. 153-5.
86. See n. 84 above.
87. See e.g. Rassam, Vol. II, pp. 93-4 where Tēwodros tries to prove his noble lineage.
88. S. Rubenson, Getachew Haile and J. Hunwick (eds.), *Acta Aethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties, 1800-1854* (Evanston and Addis Ababa, 1987), p. 13.
89. Fusella, p. 73.
90. Mengestu Lemma, *Mä'sehafä Tezeta Zä Aläqa Lämna Haylu Wäldä Tarik* (Addis Ababa, 1959 E.C.), p.85.
91. Girma-Selassie Asfaw, D. Appleyard and E. Ullendorff (eds.), *The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and Her Special Envoy* (London, 1979), pp. 3^a-3^d. "Because my fathers, the kings, sinned against God, he gave their kingdom to the Turks and the Oromo. But today, My Creator raised me from the dust, gave me power and put me on the throne of my fathers."
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 5^a-5^d.
93. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.17. It should, however, be pointed out that in his paper published in this book, Rubenson corrects this interpretation. See p. 18-19 above.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.
95. Crummey, "Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", in S. Rubenson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*.
96. See Crummey, "The Violence"; *Idem*, "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer," *Journal of African History*, X, 3 (1969); *idem*, "Orthodoxy and Imperial Reconstruction in Ethiopia, 1854-1878", *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. 5 XXIX, 2, (1978).
97. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, pp. 49-52.
98. See Zänäb, Wäldä Maryam, Fusella, Bairu.
99. Zänäb, p.5.
100. See also *idem*, "Millenarian Traditions and Peasant Movements in Ethiopia, 1500-1855", in S. Rubenson *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*.
101. R. Caulk, "Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* X, 1, (1972); Gäbrä Medhin Kidane, *Yohannes IV: Religious Aspects of his Internal Policy*, (B.A. thesis, HSIU, 1972); Seltene Seyoum, *Yohannes IV: Rise and Consolidation* (B.A. thesis, HSIU, 1972); Hussein Ahmed, *Clerics, Traders and Chiefs: A Historical Study of Islam in Wallo (Ethiopia) with special emphasis on the Nineteenth Century*, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1985); *Idem*, "The Life and Career of Shaykh Talha b. Ja'afar (c. 1853-1936)", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XXII (1989).
102. Quoted in Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p.54.

ያን ገዢዎ ሰውን መቀጠር ጀመሩ። የኪ አለታ የመቶ አለታ የአምሳ
አለታ ያሥር አለታ እያደረጉ ሸመ። የኪውን አለታ አምባል አሉት ሰመን
ከዚያ ወደያ አንኮበር ወረደ። Zanab, pp. 24-25

Trans: At that time, he counted the men. He appointed Yāšālāqa, YāMātoalāqā, YāAmsaAlāqa, Yaserālāqa. He called the Yāšālāqa ambāl. Then he went down to Ankobār.

Soon after this, there was an attempt at agitating the army to mutiny which both Zānāb (pp. 25-6) and Wāldā Maryām (pp. 13-14) describe at some length. Presumably, the soldiers were tired after such a long campaign. Could there be a connection between the restructuring and the anti-Téwodros agitation? The context suggests so, at any rate.

104. R. Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power in Ethiopia in Nineteenth Century", *Journal of African History* XXIII, No. 4, (1972), p. 610.

105. See e.g., Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 364: "Ethiopia's peasant warriors were in theory as many as her able-bodied men." On the basis of a circumspect study of his works, D. Chapple concludes that "Rubenson is thinking in terms of *lèves en masse*, farmers converted into soldiers for the moment of national crisis and presumably becoming farmers again on their return from campaign." "Warfare in the Reign of Yohannes - Three Northern Battles: Assem, Gundet and Gura", paper read on the Fifth Departmental Seminar of the Department of History (Held in Debre Zeit, June 30-3 July, 1989), p.30.

Richard Caulk, citing authorities in "medieval" history, contends that there were important changes in the system of military organisation from the 16th century onward. Up to the civil wars of *Imam* Ahmād (commonly nicknamed *Grañ*),

farmers, (*geberé*, sing.) were not usually allowed to bear arms. They paid tribute (*gibir*) and were not considered free men, the word for soldier (*hara*) having that connotation. Specific groups of the emperor's taxpayers (*gebbar*, sing.) were assigned to regiments to supply portage, pasture, pack animals, care for tents, and help with victualing. Taxes in kind as well as plunder paid for the regular army's upkeep. "Armies as Predators: Soldiers and Peasants in Ethiopia, 1850-1935", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XI, No. 3, (1978), p. 460.

Surely, Tadesse Tamrat who is cited, does not fully support this picture because he writes that, in addition to the regular army, "in times of national or local crises, the monarch raised a huge local militia, from the Christian provinces." *Church and State*, p. 90. In other words, a form of *levée en masse* is applied. The issue calls for a more in-depth investigation not least because the sources for the 18th and 19th centuries do not refer to *levée en masse*. Rather, mobilization was structural and directly linked to land tenure. See p.313 below and n. 116. Besides, this leads us to question the changes that Caulk perceives for the post-16th century eras:

By the time the Emperor Susenyos (1610 [sic.] - 1632) came to the throne, Christian peasants had taken up arms both against the animist Oromo and against their rulers' marauding soldiers. Thus, it was decreed that all were free men (*hara*, soldier) and the cultivated land itself owed tribute (*gibir*). Thereafter, the armed peasantry of the Christian empire was liable to military service and might be summoned to fill out the ranks of the full-time professional soldiers

who followed year-round the emperor or one of his lords. "Armies as Predators", p. 461.

It can therefore be concluded that the theory of *levée en masse* enjoys currency among the authorities in the field.

106. See the Chapter entitled "Maison militaire et civile d'un Dedjazmatch" in Ar. d'Abbadie, *Douze Ans*, I, pp. 327-379. On the question of military organization see, *inter alia*, Fantahun Berhane, "Gojjam, 1800-1855" (B.A. thesis H.S.I.U., 1973), pp. 43-63; S. Ege, "Chiefs and Peasants. The Socio-Political Structure of the Kingdom of Shawa in about 1840", (*Horedoppgani i Historia*, University of Bergen, 1978); the chapter on the army in R.K. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa, 1968); R. Caulk, "Armies as Predators: Soldiers and Peasants in Ethiopia, c. 1850-1935", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, XI no. 3, (1978), pp. 457-493; Merid Wolde Aregay, *Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom, 1508-1708 with special Reference to the Galla Migration and their Consequences* (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1971); Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy", pp. 251-263.
 107. T. Lefebvre and others, *Voyage en Abyssinie exécuté pendant les années 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843* (Paris, 1845-51), pp. xliiff.
 108. Plowden, pp. 45-83.
 109. Bairu, *Aṣma Giyorgis*, pp. 139-41, 503, 533, 771 and *passim*.
 110. Täklä Iyāsus, "Yä Gojjam Tarik" (IES MS no. 254), *passim*.
 111. Ar. d'Abbadie, I, pp. 327-379, gives detailed descriptions of numerical strengths and functions of military units for the army of Goṣu Zäwdé of Gojjam. Mahtämä Sellasé, *Zekrā Nāgār* (pp. 30-68, 228-269) does the same for the army of Menilek. In the past, there were famous regiments like *Qäṣṣā Nehb*, *Afro Aygäba*, *Aqet Zar* and countless others. Regiments exhibited esprit de corps and inter-generational continuity.
 112. The full-time soldier was a visible component of rural society. It was the same full-time soldier who is constantly referred to in chronicles and traveller's accounts. When Plowden (and others) divided the society into segments, one of them was always the soldier. See Plowden, p. 45. See again, Plowden (pp. 45-83) for a good description of the costume, the *mentalité* and way of life of the soldier whether full-time or part-time. For a short description of the place of a "farmer-soldier" in Lasta rural community, see McCann, pp. 43 ff.
 113. In books that described titles and functions of officials, they are invariably presented in a dichotomy: civilian and military. Even Ethiopians who had an authoritative knowledge of the traditional system (e.g. Mahtämä Sellasé, *Zekrā Nāgār*, pp. 659-668) follow the same pattern. But this is misleading, unless qualified. All those in State service from the lowest (*gultāna/mālkāna* and the lowest servant in the *ghibbis* of the lords) to the highest (judges, treasurers) were under obligation to give military service during campaigns. This is, i.e., evidenced in the chapter already cited of Ar. d'Abbadie and the first chapter of *Zekrā Nāgār* (and *passim*). For instance, the *bäjerond* as well as the *blatängéta* or the *azaj* (i.e. heads of household departments), were at the same time commanders of important detachments. In Goṣu's army, the *bäjerond* was a *ṣalāqa*, and one of Menilek's *bäjeronds*, Balca, attained fame as a major commander.
- The dichotomy, therefore, applies only to peaceful times when some were engaged in soldiering and others in civilian tasks.
114. That this was the pattern of organisation throughout the Wära Séh Mäsfenate could be seen from Plowden, Ar. d'Abbadie, Lefebvre, Pearce, etc.

The title of *šalāqa* seems to have had various functions and grades. In the court at Gondār and later in the court of Gošu, the *šalāqa* was a regimental commander of household detachments. In the list of precedence of officials the *šalāqa* was the lowest officer below even a *baša*. I Guidi, *Annales Iyasu I*, p. 313. See H. Weld Blundell (ed.), *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1849* (Cambridge, 1922), *passim* for the later Gondarine era; and also Ar. d'Abbadie, pp. 327-379, for the court of Gošu. D'Abbadie lists, for example, *Zufan-bet šalāqa*, *Fārās-Zābāna šalāqa*; the *bājerond* was also a *šalāqa*.

The *šalāqa* continues as a household commander through to the Menilek period. See *Zekrā Nāgār*, pp. 30-60, 661-664. But in this era in addition to the *šalāqa* being a junior officer the principal governors were also identified as *šalāqa*, i.e. the title of *šalāqa* rose to that of general of an army. The *šalāqa* continued to occupy varying offices in the hierarchy right up to the 1935/36 war.

The army had well-established military decorations and insignias of rank. The highest decoration at one time was called *bitāwa* which was at the time of Isenberg (1830s), "a broad bracelet of gold for rich, of silver for poor warriors, who have killed ten enemies." The other decorations - lower than *bitāwa* - were *malāyā*, *Yārbora* and *Čufa*. C. Isenberg, *Dictionary of the Amharic Language in Two Parts: Amharic-English English-Amharic* (London, 1841), pp. 90b for more or less similar definitions.

These decorations seem, however, to have fallen into disuse in the latter part of the reign of Menilek.

115. See n.105 above. The theory of *levée en masse* is used to explain significant events in 19th century history. For instance, Rubenson explains the failure of Yohannes to follow up the victory of Gura mainly by this factor. His army had to be disbanded for agricultural chores as it was an "ad hoc" army. *Survival*, p. 333.
116. See Shiferaw, "Reflections ..." for analysis and references. See also J. McCann, p. 46 for a documented description of "farmer-soldiers" in Lasta which fits my description. The conventional picture that the scholarly literature gives us is of a homogenous peasantry which was *gābar*. But this is wrong. The peasantry was rather heterogenous: those who owned *rest* with tribute obligations to the Church were not *gabar*, in the strict sense of the term. Neither were the peasants *gābar* who owned *rest* which had military obligations in lieu of tributes built into the land. The picture was normally much more complicated than even this because a single peasant could own *rest* of several statuses (*sāmon*, *zāmāša*, *gābār*, *yāfārās* etc.) due to inheritance or of purchase or of mortgage which made him, in a way, a "priest", a "soldier", a "cavalry soldier", a "*gābar*" at one and the same time. This system obtained in the *Zāmānā Māsafent* and continued through to the 1935/36 war. Haylā Selassé abolished it in his *awajs* of 1941 and 1944. See Gābrä Wäld, pp. 73-4, 101-104 for the texts of these *awajs*.
117. *Fana wagi* was a detachment in charge of lighting the royal chambers.
118. These units were variously called: *gendābāl* (Šāwa), and *čāni* (Bagemder etc. in the late 18th century).
119. See for documentation Shiferaw, "Reflections..."
120. Caulk, "Firearms...", p. 814.
121. Pankhurst, *Economic History*, p.561.
122. *King of Kings*, p.54.
123. As more and more documents are unearthed, it can be seen that there was a greater circulation of Maria Theresa thalers than heretofore assumed. See the writings of D. Crummey; Pankhurst

(ed.), *Tax Records, passim*; the marginalia photographed by Crummey and his team of researchers contain numerous land sales. One has to hold's one breath until the appearance of Crummey's study on this and other issues related to land.

124. The "accounting system" of the mid-19th century as revealed in Téwodros's register (see Pankhurst, *Tax Records*) is rather crude.

125. See notes 53-56 *supra*.

126. Saalmüller, a Protestant missionary who resided near the court of Téwodros in 1860/61, relates that in 1860 Téwodros returned from his campaign in Tegray without victory and "with a tired, and hungry army...". The exhausted peasants were not willing to pay tribute. And on top of it,

his army demanded more strongly its wages, and there was no money. This disappointment of his army placed him in danger, for the army might run away from him to join sides with his enemies who surrounded him everywhere... He became furious, especially about the spiritual class which holds the greatest part of the land, and from which the King can neither draw taxes nor upon which he even once quarter his troops. ...Consequently at that time of financial difficulties, the King broke into a terrible rage against the class concerned and took away from them all church possessions. Certain distinguished members of this class lodged protests over the King's proceedings; however, they received satisfaction with a good dose of whip lashings ... His troops he quartered on the lands in question...

But, finally, when Téwodros realized that "the moment was not opportune for such a bold stroke [he] returned all the lands." From a letter dated Gafat, January 13, 1861 available in *Staatsarchiv des Kantons Basel Stadt, C.F. Spittler Privat-Archiv 653. D3/9*. I owe my knowledge of this letter entirely to a handout in which a translation is attached prepared for a Course on Ethiopian History from the 16th century to 1855 (Hist. 301) in the Department of History (AAU).

127. See entries under *qälāb* and *dāmawāz* in Guidi, p. 240b; Isenberg, pp. 69a, 163a; Kasaté Berhan Tässäma, p. 349.

128. The French scientific mission headed by T. Lefebvre made enquiries regarding the nature of military organization in the *Zāmānā Māsafent*. They give in their book a brief but interesting description of the system I, xlii-iii). They state that, in addition to soldiers who could be raised from every village, there were professional soldiers who offered their services to whoever paid well. In any case "le noveau d'une armée, ce qui fait surtout la force d'un chef, parce qu'il y trouve un point d'appui pour maintenir sa suprématie sur ses subordonnées c'est un certain nombre des divisions par des creatures à lui, qui font partie de sa maison, et sont toujours sous ses yeux. Ces divisions s'appellent *tcheffa*. Les soldats qui les composent reçoivent leur paie du général même..."

Lefebvre and the mission point out that in that era there was no problem of recruiting soldiers. In fact, every lord "est assailli de gens qui demandent à prendre du service..." Then the authors discuss pay: "la solde d'un simple soldat ne dépasse guère la valeur de 25 francs par an; on le nourrit en lui assignant sur un district un certain nombre de mesures de grain qu'il va prélever lui-même..." Lefebvre, I, Xlii-Xliv.

In his description of the court of Gošu, to which reference has already been made, Ar. d'Abbadie also writes of soldiers who were given provisions for their maintenance. See I, 369, 327-379. The anonymous chronicler refers to the *qälbāna* force of Ras Ali. Fusella, p. 73. Plowden's description also points to the same social segment. "The Ras [Ali II] reserves for

himself a number of provinces to provide for his household officers and troops. The soldiers are paid an uncertain amount of money occasionally, and have a monthly allowance of corn." "Report" dated 9 July 1854 in FOR.401 I no. 205 (British Foreign Office). I saw a copy of this document in the handout described in n.127 above. For the same situation in Šäwa of the 1830s and 1840s, see Ege (pp. 182-8) who has carefully collected travellers accounts.

Because there were a large number of soldiers of this type, courts at times ran out of rations and consequently hunger would break out not infrequently in the courts of Ali II, Webé and Beru Gošu. The lords characteristically reacted by letting their soldiers plunder the peasantry. See, for accounts of starvation and subsequent plundering rampages, Plowden, pp. 228, 421-3; E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie dans le pays Galla, de Choa et d'Ifat*, (Paris, 1838), I, pp. 239, 253.

129. Crummey has collated all the available sources and established the frequent *sirri* (quartering) of soldiers over the Dämbiya-Wadla axis. In fact, he makes a case of the burden of this practice on the peasantry and attempts to establish a link between this practice and the widespread peasant rebellions that wrecked the last years of Tēwodros. See "Căcāho and the Politics of the Northern Wallo-Bagemder Border", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XIII, No. 1, 1975; *idem.*, *Banditry and Resistance...*
130. See Crummey, "Orthodoxy"; *idem.*, "Doctrine and Authority: Abuna Salama, 1841-1854", *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici I* (Roma, 1970). See also n. 101 above for additional references.
131. Crummey, "Orthodoxy", p.429.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 432.
133. *Idem.*, "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer", pp. 58-9.
134. *Ibid.* Though this argument has acquired the status of received wisdom, it has yet to take into account the fact that even if doctrinal uniformity was established, it would not necessarily lead to national unity and consolidation of the monarchy because of a structural factor. Provincial lords had acquired as a result of the transformations in the anatomy of the State in the last quarter of the 18th century, complete authority over the churches of their domain. They were the ones who appointed and demoted abbots, gave land and in other ways sustained the Church. Thus, they could use the provincial Church to promote their own political ends regardless of doctrine. *Aläqa* Lämna recounts an interesting tradition to the effect that the rector of Dima Giyorgis (Gojjam) gave his blessings in July 1853 a little before Ayšal to both Ali II and Kassa at short intervals. And he justified his somersault on grounds of rank opportunism. *Mäšehafä Tezeta*, pp. 83-85.
135. See nn. 101 and 130 *supra* for the references.
136. For a full citation of the authorities see Shiferaw Bekele "Prayers and Rulers in Ethiopian History: Notes for a Structural History of the Solomonic State" (forthcoming).
137. *Ibid.*
138. "Orthodoxy", pp. 439-5.
139. *Ibid.*, pp. 432ff.
140. Clerical informants in Gondär still remember with a great deal of feeling the land policies of Tēwodros. I heard this a couple of years ago from Professor Crummey and Ato Shumet Sishagne who had carried out research in the churches of the region, and from Ato Asnake Ali, instructor in the College of Teacher Education (AA), a native of Gondär.

141. Ato Abäbä Feseha, graduate of the Department of History and presently staff of the Faculty of Education, kindly shared with me his research findings regarding confiscation of land in the wake of Säggälé. He has an impressive local information from Tehulädäre Wäradä. Ato Asnake Ali, graduate (in B.A and M.A.) of the same Department, has also kindly shown me his notes which demonstrate extensive confiscation of land of the Wällo soldiery following Säggälé. See also his "The Conditions of the Peasantry in Wollo 1919-1935: A Review of the Traditions", *Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa, 1986), p.1.
142. See n. 127 above for a full length quotation from Saamüler on this issue.
143. Pankhurst, *State and Land*, pp. 93-7; Rubenson, *King of Kings*, pp. 67-70. In fact, the last years of Téwodros were marked by desperate peasant rebellions who could not bear the *Serit* on top of the burdensome taxation imposed by the emperor. See n. 129 above and Stern, *Captive Missionary*, p. 29. Walda Maryam (p. 27) observed that "ገብሩ እየተጨመረ ድሀ; እየተመረረ ሄደ". See also pp. 24-5 for a similar account.
144. Crummey, "Orthodoxy", pp. 434-5.
145. Crummey, "State and Society: 19th Century Ethiopia", *Idem* and C.C. Stewart (eds.), *Modes of Production in Africa: the Precolonial Era* (Beverly Hills and London, 1981), pp. 238-9.
146. Rubenson, *King of Kings*, p. 67.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
148. Crummey, "Tewodros as Reformer", p. 463.
149. Some very interesting work has been done on the *Kebrä Nägäst*. See, *inter alia*, D. Hubbard, "The Literary Sources of the *Kebrä Nagast*" (Ph.D. thesis University of Saint Andrews, 1956); D. Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago, 1974), pp. 93-112; Crummey, "Imperial Legitimacy", pp. 13-15; I. Shahid, "The *Kebrä Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research", *Le Muséon* 89 (Leuven, Belgium), pp. 133-178.
150. Levine, p. 107.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
152. Ethiopia had a special mission. It was the second land of Zion selected by God himself as a depository of the Ark of the Covenant. References in the Bible to Ethiopia were always cited to demonstrate the special place Ethiopia occupied in the comity of nations. See, *inter alia*, R. Pankhurst, "Fear God, Honor the King": The Use of Biblical Allusion in Ethiopian Historical Literature", *Northeast African Studies* VIII, No. 1, (1986), pp. 11-15.
153. See n. 180 of my article on the *Zāmāna Māsafent supra*, p. 67 for the appropriate documentation.
154. Quoted in Zewde Gebre-Selassie, pp. 258-9. Zewde's translation does not seem to have done justice to the original.
155. Letter reproduced in Merid Wolde Aregay and S. Rubenson, (eds.), *Readings in Ethiopian History* (Addis Ababa, 1975) pp. 266-7.
156. Gäbrä Sellasé, (Amh.), p. 97.

157. Rubenson tries to show that the name Téwodros gives rise to "universal implications of his calling". *King of Kings*, pp. 60 ff. As early as June, 1855, only four months after his coronation, Téwodros is reported to have entertained larger ambitions:

Next year he will devote to the settlement of Tigre, including the tribes along the coast, and meditates the occupation of Massowah. After that he wishes to reclaim all the provinces lately conquered by Egypt along his northern frontier; even Khartoum, as his by right ...
Quoted in *ibid*, p. 61.

Much later, Menilek too claimed Khartoum "as his by [historic] right." It becomes clear from the sources that Téwodros had thought of restoration of the old Ethiopia - however vague this idea might have been.

158. See the review of Zewde Gebre-Sellase's book and Rubenson's *Survival* by R. Caulk in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, X, 2 (1977) pp. 293-297.
159. Zewdie Gabra-Sellase, p. 101.
160. "Imperial Legitimacy", pp. 15-16.
161. *Ibid*.
162. Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 269-272, 284-287.
163. *Ibid.*, pp. 269- 272. Rubenson cites a number of these observers. As perceptive an Ethiopia watcher as W. Munzinger made the same conclusion.
164. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 269.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
167. The review by Caulk cited in n. 158, p. 293.
168. *Ibid*.
169. Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 272; *idem.*, "King of Kings", p. 90.
170. Unlike what the centralists (or theoreticians of the "centrifugal tendency of the nobility" school) tell us, one of the, if not the, major sources of instability from the 1770s to the turn of the 1870s - a whole century - was that succession was in principle open to all regional rulers. Or, put another way, the failure of the Wära Séh and of Téwodros to establish their legitimacy was one of the, if not the, principal causes of widespread rebellions.
171. "Banditry and Rebellion", p. 267.
172. Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, pp. 1-2.
173. Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 2. For an earlier analysis of the same issue, see also *idem.* "Some Aspects of the Survival of Ethiopian Independence in the Period of the Scramble for Africa", *Historians in Tropical Africa* (Salisbury, 1960) and in *University College Review* (Addis Ababa, 1962). The secret of the survival of Ethiopian independence has for long intrigued observers and scholars. As late as 1974, D. Levine wrote a whole book with the primary objective of unravelling the secret. See his *Greater Ethiopia* (preface).

174. Rubenson, *Survival*, p.2.
175. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
177. *Ibid.*, p. 409-410.
178. Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p.3.
179. *Ibid.*, p.4.
180. H. Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Challenge of Independence* (Boulder, Col., 1986), p. 2.
181. Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p. 3.
182. Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Challenge*, p. 5.
183. *Ibid.*
184. Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity".

The first of these is the fact that the population of the country has increased very rapidly since 1850. This is due to a number of causes, but the most important is the discovery of gold in California.

The second cause is the discovery of gold in California. This has led to a large influx of people from all over the world, and has caused a great increase in the population of the country.

The third cause is the discovery of gold in California. This has led to a large influx of people from all over the world, and has caused a great increase in the population of the country.

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The twelfth cause is the discovery of gold in California. This has led to a large influx of people from all over the world, and has caused a great increase in the population of the country.

PART VII

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY*

Shiferaw Bekele

This bibliography covers the period from the *Zāmānā Māsafent* to the death of Yohannes in 1889. Its focus is on those areas of Ethiopia which are conventionally identified as Abyssinia - i.e. provinces from Šāwa to the Red Sea. We have therefore left out materials on southern Ethiopia published by authors while including their works on the north.

It is intended to be used not so much by specialists of 19th century Ethiopian history as by students and general readers. It by no means pretends to be exhaustive. Nevertheless an attempt has been made to include as much as possible of the published literature (both primary and secondary) and unpublished dissertations and papers.

Téwodros even more than Yohannes has been the subject of tremendous popularization in the Ethiopian mass media. This trend, which began around the 1960s, gained speed during the early years of the Revolution and rose to a crescendo over the past few years. Neither space nor time allows one to cover the extensive media literature. In any case this omission will not very much affect the serious student of 19th century Ethiopia since most of it is popularization of already known information or outright mythologisation. Recent popular writings will, however, be of use to the future student who is interested in reconstructing the *mentalité* of the Ethiopians since the 1960s.

The main reason for the preparation of this bibliography is the absence of an up-to-date published bibliography on this very crucial period of Ethiopian history. Earlier bibliographies (such as G. Fumagalli's *Bibliografia etiopica* (Milan, 1893), that in de Coppet's edition of Gäbrä Sellaseé's *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II* (Paris, 1930-1), and even Alula Hidarū and Dessalegn Rahmato, *A Short Guide to Ethiopia* (Westport, Conn. 1976) and Clifton Brown, *Ethiopian Perspectives* (Westport, Conn. 1978) are much outdated. As research expands and scholars publish in widely-flung journals and cities, the need for a bibliography is ever more keenly felt. It is hoped that this modest attempt will satisfy some of these demands. As we go to press, we learn of the appearance of a new reference work by Paulos Milkias, *Ethiopia: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Boston, 1989) which contains close to 20,000 entries.

* I thank Dr. R. Pankhurst for going through this bibliography and for his considerable assistance in the course of compilation.

The reader is also advised to consult scholarly journals which publish historical articles on Ethiopia. The *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* is published by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and very often carries articles relevant to the period under discussion. The JES's published index covers only volumes I to XIV, *Index to Vols. I-XIV (1963-79)* (Dec., 1980). It is, therefore, mandatory to check every forthcoming issue to keep up-to-date with the developments in the area.

The Institute of African Studies of Asmara University puts out the *Ethiopian Journal of African Studies* in which essays of interest to the student of 19th century Ethiopia are also published.

Abroad are issued several journals of high repute which sometimes print historical articles or book reviews on Ethiopia. The following are the most relevant: *Journal of African History* (London), *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* (Paris), *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (Rome), *Africa* (Rome), *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (Boston) and *Northeast African Studies* (East Lansing, Michigan). Almost all of these journals publish indices which help the student to check quickly if there is anything on Ethiopia.

Moreover, to keep abreast of developments, it is useful to follow the publications of the *Proceedings* of International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies which have now reached ten. Rita Pankhurst has compiled a valuable bibliography entitled "International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies I-VI, 1959-1980. Author and Subject Bibliography", published in S. Rubenson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (1984). Until this is updated to include subsequent *Proceedings*, readers will have to look into later volumes themselves.

A useful and analytical introduction to the sources for 19th century Ethiopian history is offered in chapter 1 of S. Rubenson's monograph, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*. R. Caulk's article "Menelik and the Ethio-Egyptian War of 1875-76: A Reconsideration of Source Material" forcefully drives home the point that Rubenson makes: the need to examine carefully and re-examine the sources; otherwise one would fall into the ever-present danger of mythification and falsification.

Mention should also be made of H. Marcus's *The Modern History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* (Stanford, California, 1972) which lists articles in nineteenth and early twentieth century geographical and related journals, and to Rita and Richard Pankhurst's "Select Annotated Bibliography of Travel Books on Ethiopia", *Africana Journal* (1978, 2 and 3) which discusses the principal travel books. Works on Ethiopia in German are listed in H.W. Lockot's comprehensive *Bibliografia Aethiopica: Die Äthiopienkundliche Literatur des Deutschsprachigen Raums* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

A standard *historical atlas* of Ethiopia has still to be prepared. Until then, one has to make do with a number of maps which nevertheless must be treated with considerable caution. The Ethiopian Mapping Authority recently published a *National Atlas of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1988) which has a chapter devoted to historical maps. The maps dealing with the period covered by the present volume must, however, be cautiously used as they suffer from a number of inaccuracies.

Nineteenth century travellers have included maps in their books. Guillaume Lejean's *Voyage en Abyssinie - Exécuté de 1862 à 1864: Atlas* (Paris, 1872) has a number of maps for specific localities. His maps on the towns and environs of Aksum, Adwa, Däbrä Tabor and Mahdrä Maryam are especially interesting. For the latter *Zāmāna Masafent* there are a number of detailed maps in Combes et Tamisier (1838), Vol. IV, Isenberg and Krapf (1843), Krapf (1860), and A.K. Johnston, *The Handy Royal Atlas* (London, 1871) also reproduced in Zewde G. Sellasie (1975), as well as in the atlas volumes to Ferret and Galinier (1847) and T. Lefebvre and others (1845-51). For the British expedition to Mäqdāla, detailed maps are provided in Holland and Hozier (1870) and Markham (1869). The only historical geography of the country, G.W.B. Huntingford's *The Historical Geography of Ethiopia* (London, 1989), though valuable, covers only the period from the first century A.D. to 1704.

The sketch maps in Rubenson (1976) are useful not only for the entire period but also for the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. Though only sketches, they have not so far been superseded.

For students and readers interested in visual materials, many of the travellers' accounts include engravings. R.K. Pankhurst and Leila Ingrams have included a representative collection in their book entitled: *Ethiopia Engraved: An Illustrated Catalogue of Engravings by Foreign Travellers from 1681 to 1900* (London and New York, 1988). This book is perhaps the sole introduction to date to engravings.

For published treaties and foreign office documents of Britain, France, Italy and other countries, the bibliographies of S. Rubenson (1976) and de Coppet (1930-1) are departure points for students interested in pursuing a similar theme. Of considerable interest in this field are the International Council of Archives' *Guides to the Sources of the History of Africa*, notably the *Guide delle Fonti per la storia dell' Africa a Sud del Sahara esistenti in Italia* prepared by C. Giglio and E. Lodolini (London, and Zug, 1973). An analytical introduction to missionary sources is offered by D. Crummey in his articles "Missionary Sources and their Contribution to Our Understanding of Ethiopian History, 1830-1868" (1970) and "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer" (1969).

In as far as unpublished primary sources on Ethiopia are concerned, perhaps the largest depository in the world is the Manuscript section of the IES. The most noteworthy in this regard is perhaps the chronicle of *Negus Täklä Haymanot*

prepared by Tāklä Iyāsus, currently being edited and translated into English, at Oxford University, by Girma Getahun. It covers the entire range from the mid-18th century to the twentieth. There are also other materials of relevance (the manuscripts deposited by the Ras Kasa family, the collections of Crummey and his team of researchers, the Rubenson collection of microfilm materials from European archives etc.) for the period under consideration. The microfilm project of the Institute launched several years ago is covering extensive grounds from European, Turkish, Egyptian and Sudanese archives. Many manuscripts, hitherto buried in the non-accessible depositories abroad, are now available in microfilm form thanks to this project. Until a catalogue is prepared, however, the researcher may have to go through the entire list.

Chris Prouty and E. Rosenfeld have published a fairly long bibliography in which they have included a useful section on "Bibliographies, Indexes, Study Aids" (See *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia*, London, 1981, pp. 402-407).

This bibliography is not concerned with Ge'ez manuscripts, but reference may be made to the catalogues of the various collections, which are listed in one of the most recent, S. Strelciyn's *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the British Library acquired since the year 1877* (London, 1978). Numerous Ethiopian manuscripts have also been microfilmed by the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (E.M.M.L.), and have been catalogued, mainly by Getachew Haile, in an ever expanding multi-volume *Catalogue* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1975). For a bibliographical account of Ethiopian manuscripts outside the country see S. Zanutto, *Bibliografia etiopica* (Rome, 1932).

The items in our bibliography are divided into four sections the order of which is arbitrary.

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- b) Secondary Literature
- c) Published Amharic and Ge'ez Sources
- d) Literary Works.

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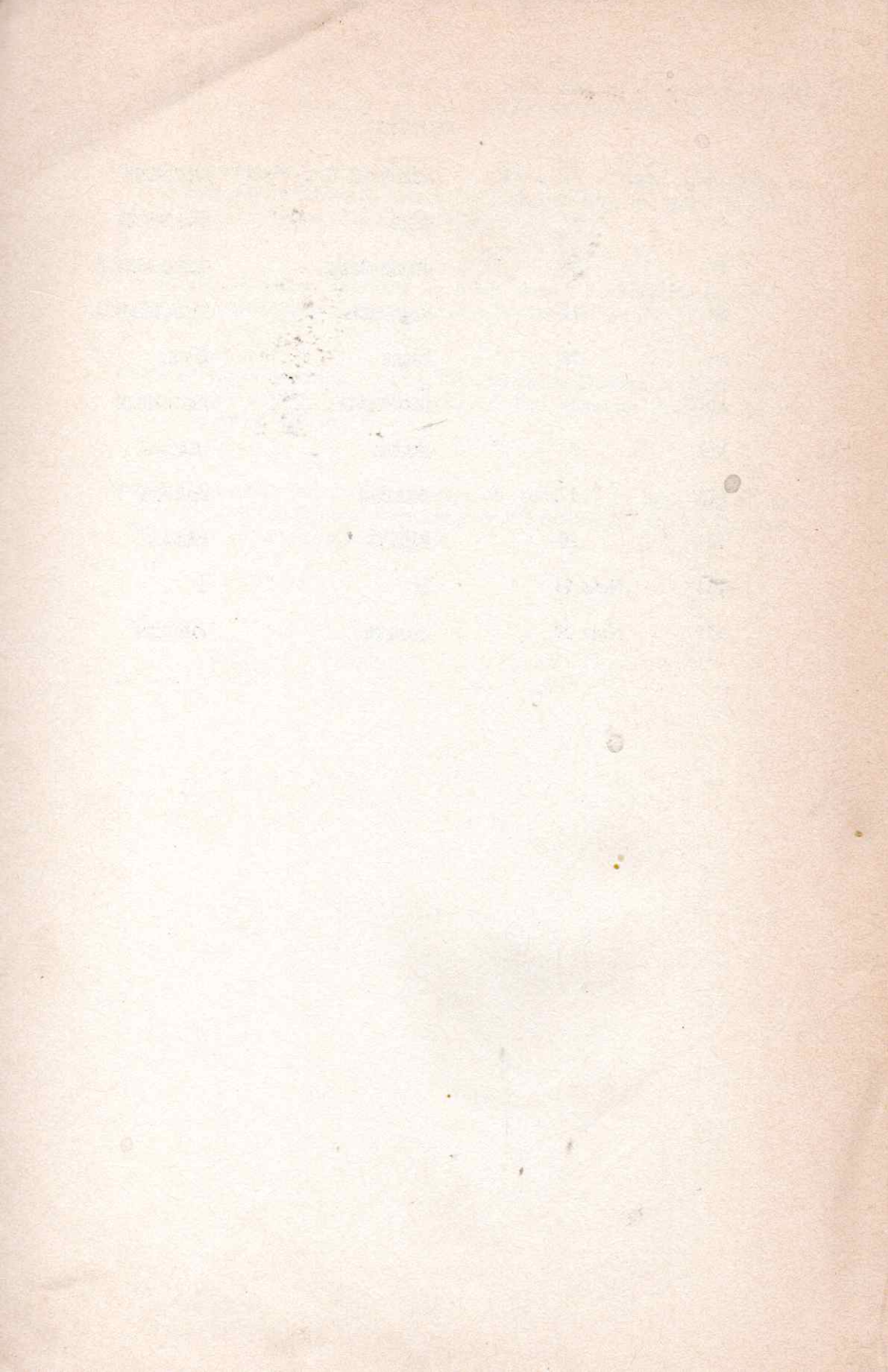
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ERRATA

Page 41	line	37	for	<u>rebellions</u>	read	<u>rebellious</u>
" 46	"	37	"	<u>after</u>	"	<u>afterwards</u>
" 47	"	34	"	<u>demonstrate</u>	"	<u>demonstrates</u>
" 49	"	12	"	<u>form state</u>	"	<u>form of state</u>
" 49	"	28	"	<u>Kigns</u>	"	<u>Kings</u>
" 119	"	5	"	<u>participant</u>	"	<u>participent</u>
" 119	"	6	"	<u>prenra</u>	"	<u>prendra</u>
" 123	"	17	"	<u>Arnauld</u>	"	<u>Antoine</u>
" 124	"	10	"	<u>Milá'el</u>	"	<u>Mika'el</u>
" 124	Note 13			<u>II</u>	"	<u>I</u>
" 125	Note 29			<u>Arnauld</u>	"	<u>Antoine</u>





This collection of papers offers strikingly divergent views and approaches to the lives, times and images of Téwodros II (1855-68) and Yohannes IV (1872-89). Some of the articles effectively challenge a number of basic assumptions and interpretations of 19th century Ethiopian history. The papers, moreover, illuminate a number of important issues, several of which are still of major contemporary relevance.

A new dimension is also provided by a study of historical paintings on Téwodros as well as by the inclusion of reproductions of a number of paintings. In an attempt to make the book more useful to students and the general reader, an extensive bibliography is included.